

ISSUE
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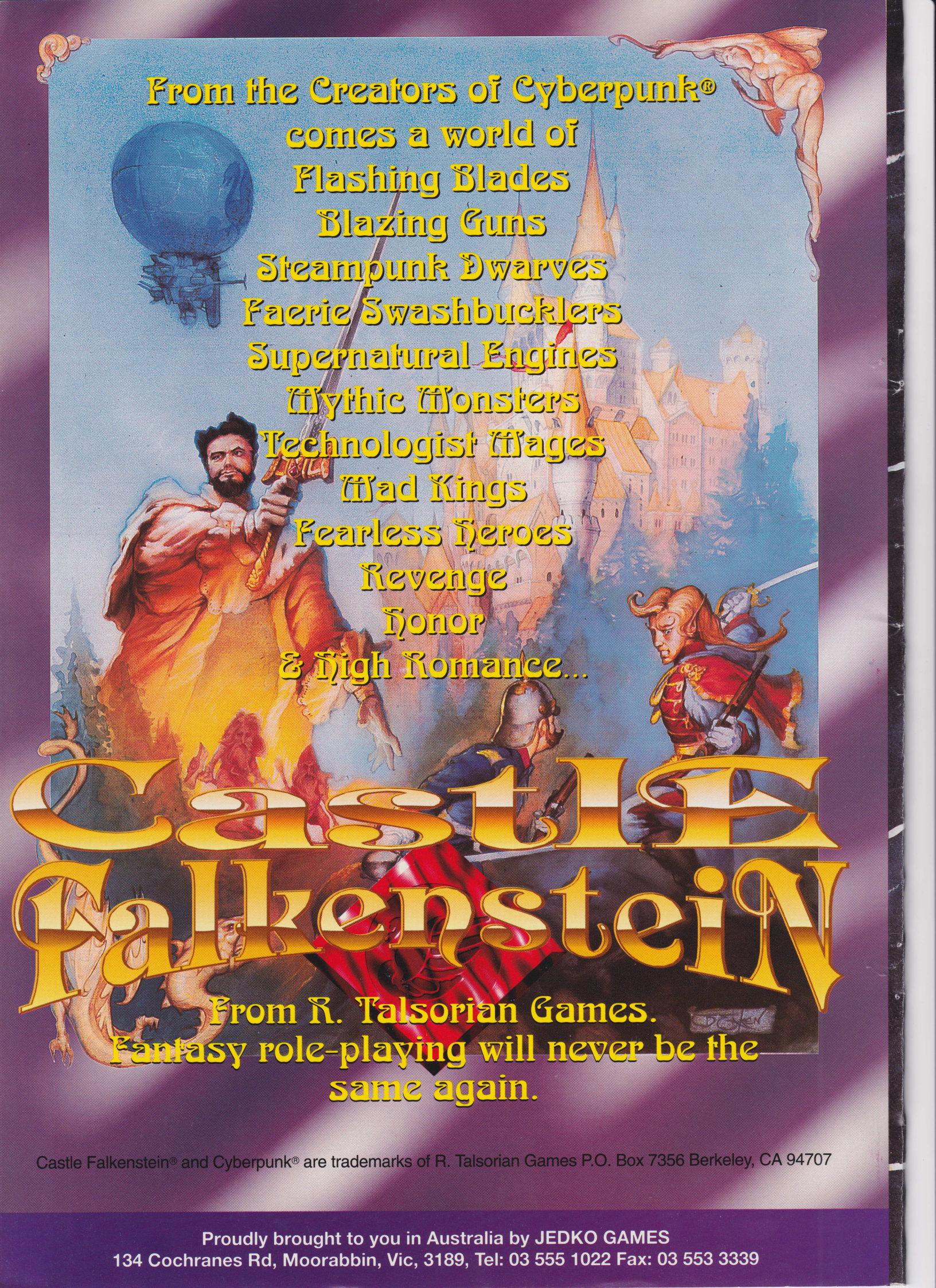
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Australian Realms

Issue 13, September/October 1993

The Australian Magazine of Role Playing

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Editorial Letters

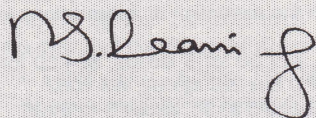
Like Frankenstein's monster, the magazine has taken on a life of its own. Since we began it has grown from 32 to 52 pages and needs more and more "input" each issue to keep it happy. This puts additional pressure on the Realms team, but we truly appreciate the support of our writers, artists, readers and advertisers that have made this phenomenal growth possible. Australia deserves a gaming magazine of true quality, and we humbly believe we are beginning to make that dream a reality.

The Readers Poll survey was a huge success. The time you took to fill out the form and post it to us has been a great help in giving us further direction and goals; we learnt a lot from your comments and we'll be implementing a number of changes over the next few issues to cater to your stated desires.

Now that we have made more room for the Editorial you can expect to hear more from me - this could be good or bad according to your point of view. One thing I personally would like to see is more mail commenting on what is being printed in the magazine. Do you agree with the opinions expressed in the magazine. Let me know your own views.

For instance, what do you think of Stewart Wieck's comment (page 12) that White Wolf are 'pushing the envelope of games a bit', or Colin Taber's statements (page 22) that it is the player's responsibility to know the rules? The Letters page is your forum, I'd love to hear and publish your opinions.

Until then, enjoy gaming. We do!



Nick Leaning.

Adrian Whitehead
President Shadow League
In reply to Daniel Hall (issue 12)

Dear Daniel

If you are interested in starting up a Live Role Playing club please feel free to write to *Shadow League Australia Inc.*, to get a copy of our club "Starter Kit" which includes the following three booklets: "Introduction to LRP & Shadow League", "Starting a LRP Club", "Basic Weapon Making Hand Book", totalling over 50 pages of detailed information.

I wish at this point to thank all those people who replied to *Shadow League's* advertisements in Australian Realms, especially those people who requested information on setting up a new club. We were literally flooded with replies and it has taken some time to get back to everyone - by the time this letter is published you should all have received a reply. If anyone missed out or wants information regarding setting up a LRP club or about Shadow League please write to us at PO Box 489 Blackburn, Vic. 3130.

We have invited Adrian to submit an article summarising some of the information featured in the Shadow League's "Starter Kit".

Walter Saltmarsh
Mt Barker WA

Dear Australian Realms,

I am writing to you to congratulate you on an excellent magazine that you have produced although I find that there is not enough practical segments such as Deep Dark Dungeons and Raising the Stones. I would also like to see some mapping techniques for dungeons and overground, and maybe you could include maps in the magazine. I would like to see a section written about writing your own modules instead of writing the modules for us.

I would also like to thank you for introducing me to the world of PBM as I had never heard of it before I read your magazine, could there be more written about this? Otherwise, it is an excellent magazine, probably the best gaming magazine I have read.

The practical segments, or "How To..." articles as we call them rated highly in the recent Readers Poll so we have every intention of continuing them. There are two in this issue alone - "A Woman's Scorn" and "Plotting Doom". We will get Alan Ogden onto mapping

techniques soon, and Alan has already covered writing modules to some degree but this will be explored further. As for PBM... this issue has quite a bit more than usual, with the feature article "Victory is Just a Block Away" on page 34.

Tim Smith
East Burwood, VIC
Dear Nick and The Crew

I have been meaning to write for a while, and the poll in issue #11 was a great reason to finally do so.

Firstly may I congratulate you on coming back. PLEASE stay! I must say that I only really bought issue #6 'cause of the Shadowrun article, but I really like the magazine. However every issue has been *better and better*. I have taken to going into the local retailer weeks before Australian Realms came in, just hoping for news. Yours is the only magazine I have six consecutive issues of... actually Australian Realms is the only magazine I have six issues of period!

Now, down to business. On page 41, issue #10, Robin Issel said... "Then consult the weapons damage table to determine the damage inflicted to each location." Which weapons damage table? Please give references or publish the table. I love the idea and have played with them. It stopped Battletech taking about 6 hours for two 20 ton mechs to kill each other! (We also use a slight variation of Mechwarrior Brewer's initiative rules). And on the topic of Battletech, please remember not everyone fights for the Clan.

Would it be possible to start up a column featuring new vehicles/cyberware/weapons/anything for game systems? A column where a new AD&D spell shares space with a new cybereye and a 20-ton Battlemech? Maybe called 'Santa's Workshop' or 'The Multi-dimensional Magic, Military, Mechanics & Mayhem Merchandising Department'.

Please bring back the Top Ten if possible. Keep up the great work.

The idea of a 'Trading Gallery' is something we have been tossing around with the empty curry take-away cartons for some time. Thanks to your contribution the first run of the column appears on page 18.

We did receive quite a bit of mail about the missing Weapons Damage Table which Robin did supply but the production gremlins mislaid. We've printed the table on page 18 of this issue. The Top Ten will be run next issue... a Top Ten for 1993.

TRAVELLER - The New Era

Science Fiction RPG
by GDW

Reviewed by Paul Mitting

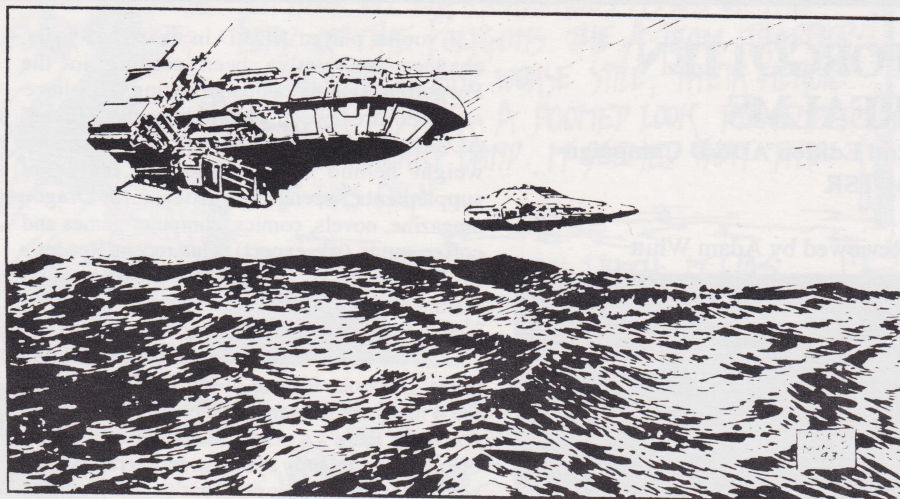


I have long been a fan of the Traveller roleplaying game. It has provided science fiction gamers with one of the most believable and comprehensive universes in which to play out their hi-tech fantasies. The game system has gone through many changes in recent years, with radical changes in the game mechanics. Most radical however have been the upheavals that have been written into the history of the Traveller universe.

In the Shattered Imperium we had the assassination of the Emperor Strephon and the commencement of the civil wars. These wars were to run rampant for a dozen years, and ultimately lead to the final death-knell of the Third Imperium.

This death-knell was in the form of a computer virus, simply called Virus. Not any small virus like we have today though. This was specially crafted by madmen who thought they could win the final battle by unleashing it on their foes. Instead, their creation infected every computer based system or machinery that it came into contact with. It was artificially intelligent and VERY malevolent. It caused nuclear power stations to explode, starships to crash themselves into cities, robots to rampage through households. As they say in the intro, "Virus was every ship, every machine, suddenly come murderously alive".

The aftermath of the wars and then Virus was to leave many worlds totally destroyed. Others reverted to barbarism and many lost all technology and the knowledge that went with it. The setting of the game is 70 years after Virus, as the survivors are trying to re-establish trade and civilisation.



Some pockets of the old high tech civilisation survived. A major group is the Old Expanses. Here, contact with the Hivers has managed to keep a starfaring technology going. The people of these worlds have united under the Reformation Coalition, "committed to bringing a new era of enlightenment to ravaged human space". Another pocket of civilisation is the Regency, where the high-tech world of the old Imperium lives on.

This is the New Era of Traveller; a tremendously complex and detailed universe has been wiped clean of the old order and a new canvas has been created on which to paint new adventures and discoveries. The prospect may seem daunting, but when you read the background you will agree that the opportunities for Traveller adventures has never been better.

Enough on the universe, it's down to basics. The game rules comprise 384 pages, and are some of the most detailed and all-encompassing that I have seen for a science fiction game. The character generation system still revolves around the UPP - the Universal Personality Profile. The various attributes are randomly generated, and then modified to allow for any variations your homeworld may have caused.

Once you have reached 17 years of age, you then choose a career. These careers are served in 4 year terms, and you can try and change careers after each term is finished. Each term of a career gives you opportunities for skill development, promotions, contacts (people you get to know who may help you later in life) and finally mustering out benefits. The latter is where your character can acquire ownership of a starship, if he rolls well enough. Mind you, the outstanding debts on these ships can be pretty staggering.

Skill resolution is based around the Task. Each attempt to do something is called a Task, and the gamemaster sets a difficulty level for success. You then use your relevant skills and attributes to roll higher than the required value for success. Sounds simple, although there are many pages of text detailing it. Be prepared for a lot of reading.

The combat system is truly incredible. I tend to favour lots of mayhem in my games, and the New Era certainly caters for me here. The rules for combat range from unarmed fisticuffs to starships battling it out in deep space. Unlike earlier versions of the game, the combat process is reasonably unified. The rules for hand to hand combat merge well with the vehicle combat rules (ground, water and aerial combat) up to the aforementioned starships and their megadeath weaponry.

Traveller was always noted for its extensive combat rules and the New Era holds to this tradition. There are the many weapons available for personal use. Armour is still there, including my old favourite Battle Dress. It's just not Traveller unless you've got Battle Dress and a Fusion Rifle 15.

Background information on various worlds and pocket empires is provided, with rules for generating new worlds and cultures. The information here is good, but I am sure will be expanded upon with future releases. The historical info supplied on the collapse and Virus itself gives many adventure ideas. The possibilities are literally endless, as many worlds have fallen backwards to differing degrees and have adapted their cultures off at wildly varying tangents to what was once the Imperium norm. The various black and white illustrations liberally scattered throughout the text are a further source of ideas for new cultures and their inhabitants.

The two sample scenarios provided give a good feel for the universe and introduce players to the New Era fairly quickly. They are simple plots, with little depth. Nevertheless, they are easy to run and will give you plenty of opportunities for roleplaying, investigation, discovery and general mayhem. In fact lots of mayhem.

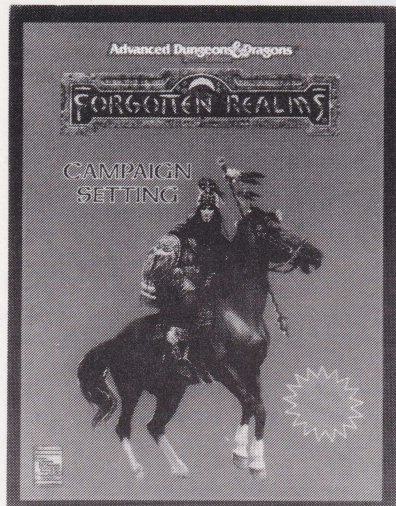
The New Era is a very solid and well written product overall. It takes the Traveller universe in a fresh direction.

If you liked the older versions of Traveller, or you want to get into a great new science fiction roleplaying game, then I can heartily recommend TRAVELLER - THE NEW ERA.

FORGOTTEN REALMS

2nd Edition AD&D Campaign
by TSR

Reviewed by Adam Whitt



If you've played AD&D in the past 5 years, chances are you've been playing in the **Forgotten Realms** campaign setting. TSR have set up Ed Greenwood's world to be the 'official' AD&D campaign, and put all their corporate weight behind it with literally scores of supplements, scenarios, articles in *Dragon* magazine, novels, comics, computer games and coffee mugs (we expect). Our recent Reader's Poll showed it to be the most popular commercially available setting.

So what is new in this version?

Well the box is bigger and contains a few new items - 3 books instead of the first edition's 2; the 4 maps are the same except they've been recoloured; there's a poster; 6 cut-out card sheets of runes, sigils, holy symbols and heraldry; and some *Monstrous Compendium* pages. If you've got the first edition and you've followed all the merchandise, you know all about the new stuff included here - so stick with what you've got.

Production quality is high and the maps have improved in that they are plastic covered now for better durability. The new colouring tends to make them look cluttered however - trees are drawn where once there was solid green for forests. Artwork is fair to excellent throughout (although more care could have been taken with some of the reproductions), and the text, which in large blocks is the same as the original, is of a consistently high standard if a little dry for my tastes.

What I mean here is that although **Forgotten Realms** is a classic fantasy world in the tradition of Lewis, Tolkien and Donaldson, with fantastic beasts, buried treasures, strange cultures, wars and endless adventure, it is all too clean and clear cut for my liking. Too many fantasy clichés abound. The popular gaming imagination in the US seems to hanker for a fantasy universe of gratification rather than self-exploration. Perhaps I'm delving too deep here; when all's said and done, AD&D is a only game and this is as good a place as any to play it if you like it that way.

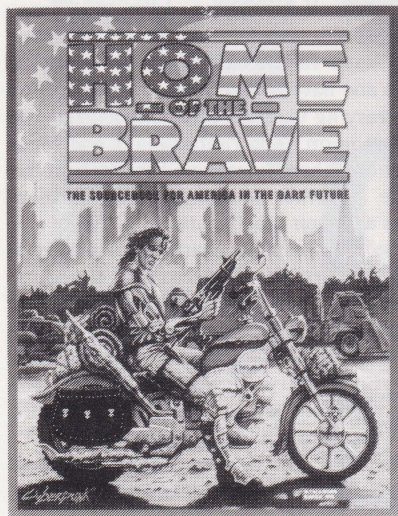
Forgotten Realms has been added to extensively by writers other than Ed Greenwood over the past 10 years since TSR acquired it. This gives the campaign a completeness not present in any of its rivals. The very useful timeline on pages 14 to 18 of the *Running the Realms* book is testimony to this fact with nearly 3000 years of history covered in some detail. Many of the more recent events have been covered in the many novels which adds further depth to the setting. A bonus is the *Shadowdale* book which gives players a place to start plus a 40 page scenario.

So if you're one of those many referees who cannot devote as much time as you'd like to building your own and you can afford to buy a prepackaged campaign, it makes good sense to buy this as it will continue to grow and gain support from TSR.

HOME OF THE BRAVE

Cyberpunk sourcebook
by R.Talsorian Games

Reviewed by Colin Taber



I was quite looking forward to reviewing this item, I always find topical sourcebooks interesting, I would even go as far to say I'm a sucker for them. Unfortunately this time I was in for a few disappointments.

The book details the USA for Cyberpunk 2020 and comes in at 143 pages. The art is good and the overall look is good, its just the text (and the cover's electric blue border!) that fails to deliver.

Let me start from the beginning, the time line is in my opinion flawed. There are too many bits and pieces that don't fit, too many things that are unrealistic. While this does make for good gaming background (and that is probably more important than my complaint) it does irritate me. On the whole the background is "okay". Like I said, I believe it is flawed but it is interesting reading and does make a very fast paced back drop for Cyberpunk.

What does balance the time line section is most definitely the sections that give more detail on the various state groupings. Most of this is very good, parts are exceptional. For example the Free States section is well worked out overall and the way R Talsorian Games has narrated and constructed the background behind the birth of a free Texas Republic and Alaska is very intelligent.

So, overall the text is good, but unbalanced. As players will be playing with the *here and now*, my whines about the time line can

obviously be catered for as its all in the past. One thing should be said though, perhaps the only way to make the US an interesting place for cyber adventure is to have "The Collapse" or some such thing (perhaps like elves and magic), otherwise it is a bit too sedate, some thing RTG obviously picked up on.

The book also has sections dealing with the economy, the military, lifestyle and how the *new* post-collapse American government works. The product covers a good many common-sense things such as pay rates, taxes and more, therefore it comes with a lot of information that serious 'punk referees will want. Amongst this is a smattering of adventure hooks, a great idea. These sections are all well done, some again very interesting to read. No complaints here.

The book looks good, art and those well done computer ditties make for a good looking product. Such innovative uses of computer graphics is long overdue in the gaming industry. As always RTG is a trail blazer.

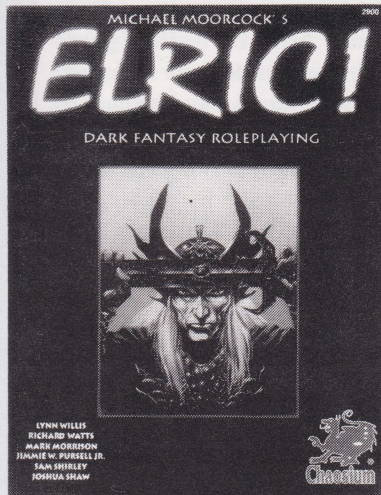
In summary a good book, it could have been better, but when all things are considered, any book with a picture of "The Church of Elvis" (page 33) wins me over any time.

"Don't you step on my Blue Suede shoes."

ELRIC!

Dark Fantasy Role Playing
by Chaosium Inc.

Reviewed by Andrew Daniels



With Michael Moorcock either you think he's the most original writer since Dunsany, or else a mundane mimic of his own stories bent on endlessly repeating the same formula. Me, I've long been captivated by his dark tales, especially his albino Prince. Where other heroes sport muscles and bon homme, Moorcock's weakling Elric sulks, moans and every time he finds someone he likes, he accidentally kills them!

Elric! is a roleplaying game set in the Young Kingdoms of the Elric novels. The idea of using a literary setting appeals as it gives the players an instant feel for the game, adventuring in a background they are familiar with. The book is logically set out; an excellent orientation to the game's world is followed by the core rules (tabbed for easy visibility), the Gamemaster Only section, and a reference section. The pages are well laid out with concise text and boxed sections highlighting important or explanatory points. Illustrations are sparse but lovely.

Lets look at the important bits first. The index. Having spent too many gaming nights frantically searching for that hideously obscure rule (was it in the main manual? first or second edition?), I now refuse to even look at a game without a decent index. Fortunately, **Elric!** scores well in that department, and lo and behold its right next to a playing aids section with neatly grouped

tables/summary all readily accessible at the end of the book.

Next good idea. A selection of non-player characters; ideal for that moment when improvising runs you into a blind alley. In addition there is an array of adversary creatures all drawn directly from Moorcock, plus a couple of short scenarios designed to prod players in the right direction whilst learning the game.

The combat system is quick and simple; a Spot Guide answers the questions about unusual combat situations - 'How much damage does acid do?' 'What if a take careful aim?'. All clear cut and thorough.

Moorcockian magic has always been overpowering - given to ranting and summoning of demons. **Elric!** remains true to this but adds a host of usable spells that don't put the whole town at risk. Magic is open to everyone but is really the specialty of Chaos (the alignment system in this game is the best I've seen). Player classes are given a number of typical spell at the outset, but are encouraged to seek more, even to the extent of devising their own.

Elric! works because Moorcock's creation remains fresh and cries out for exploration and adventure. The game provides a framework to do this in. In short - a recommended product. I await the Corum, Hawkmoon and Erekoze expansions!!

SPACE LAIRS

AD&D 2nd Edition

Spelljammer Accessory by TSR

Reviewed by Adam Whitt

Spelljammer must have been one of those moments of inspiration around the boardroom table in Lake Geneva when someone said - "Hey, we've just about flogged these elves to death why not put 'em in space?"

Co-written by an Australian, Wes Nicholson, **Space Lairs** is a fine addition to the wacky Spelljammer universe. **Space Lairs** is in the tradition of the Book of Lairs in that it provides the harrassed DM with 13 mini-adventures plus one medium sized adventure as satellites to his main campaign. And let me tell you, the plot ideas are good - very good.

I like the way the adventures are laid out with summary statistics at the head of each that tell the DM at a glance what terrain, monster, XP and party level the scenario presents. This plus the several alternative set up suggestions makes the product very user friendly.

Art is the only disappointing part of this product - sparse and boring. With such great text material to work with I can only assume the artists were not given enough time to work on their briefs. Otherwise - great.

PLAYERS GUIDE

WEREWOLF GAME BOOK

By White Wolf Games

Reviewed by Malcolm Adler

Coming in at over 230 pages this book is quite impressive. You might expect such a large book to contain chapter after chapter of quality expansions for Werewolf.

It doesn't.

I was annoyed to find inconsistencies between art, layout and text quality. The work as a whole is good but could have been better.

A worthwhile purchase for a devoted player or storyteller, but otherwise not required. It covers in more depth the tribes, caerns, Umbra and other shapeshifters. It also has a more detailed character creation section. More on Septs, such as Moots and Challenges and expanded rules for Rage and Combat.

The one thing that easily got a frenzied reaction from my fellows was the Merits and Flaws section. Sorry, but power gamer heaven.

More rules for those who want them, but more rules don't make for a better story.

I can only say I'm hoping for better from the future, as one of my players said, "Bring on the Amazon."

CARDMASTER

AD&D 2nd Edition

Adventure Design Deck by TSR

Reviewed by Ron Fielding

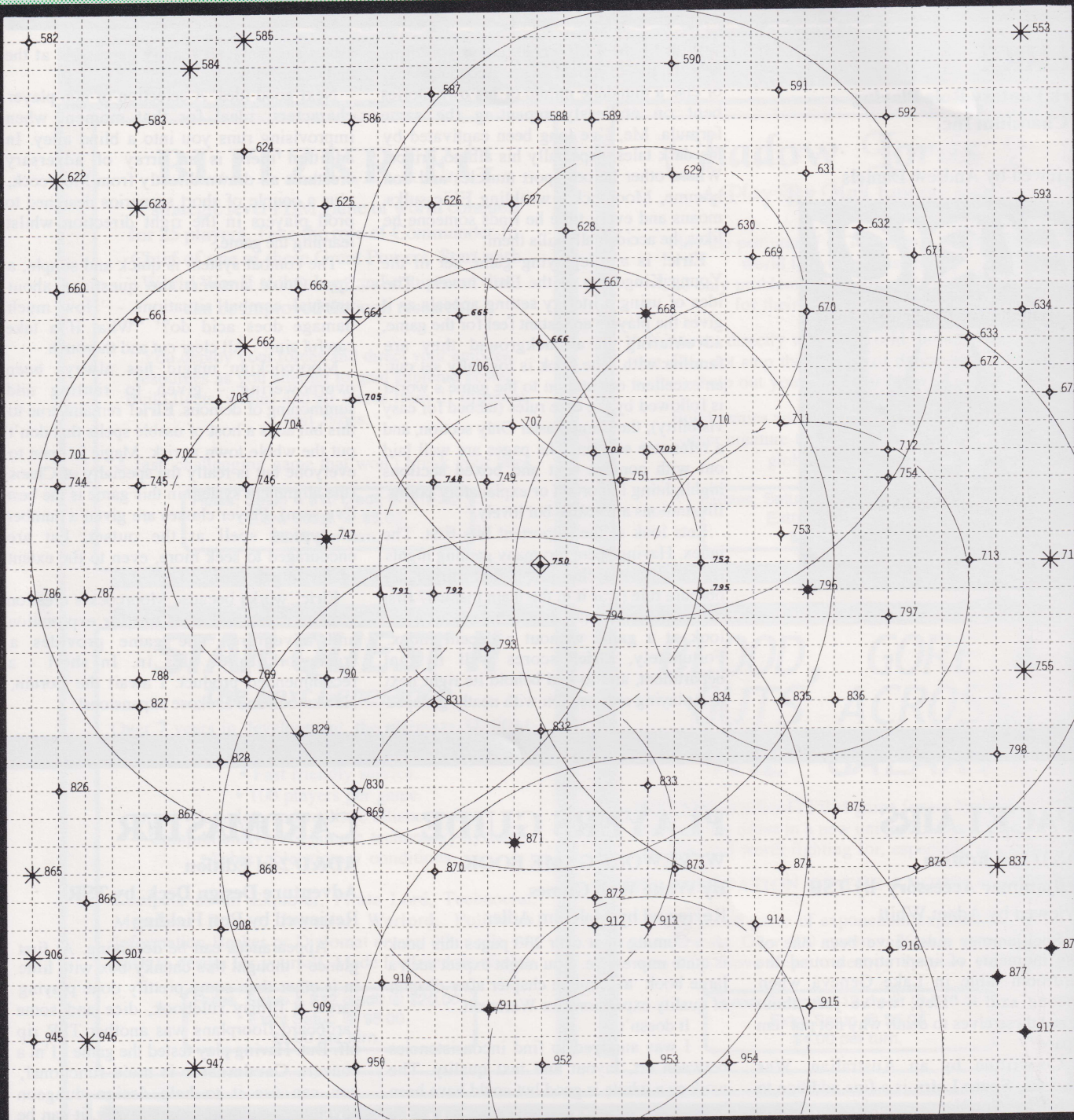
Appearances can be deceiving. At first glance I thought this chunky box with little in it other than some prettily done playing cards, a flimsy rulebook, dice and some cardboard floorplans was another TSR rip off. But. Having play tested the game - I'm a convert. **Cardmaster** is multi-functional; you can use it to help design dungeon adventures or, more impressively, it can be played as a "fastplay" version of our favourite roleplaying game - AD&D.

The rules are read and learnt in five minutes, then you are off and playing and having FUN. Remember that? That was the glassy eyed wonderment you used to experience the first time you ever role played. The colourfully painted cards are turned over and you start rolling dice with crazed abandonment. The alternative system for combat and magic resolution is superbly simple and FAST. So much so that I'm tempted to use them next time I run a "real" AD&D session. Well done TSR.

With a few plastic miniatures and a proper game board this accessory could have been a true classic in the mode of **Dungeon**.

Brilliant!

GALAXY



A game of space conquest and diplomacy.

GALAXY is a complex science fiction game where upto 100 players fight for control in a universe of several thousand stars. If you are familiar with the Spiral Arm game system then some of the aspects of GALAXY will be known to you, but there are many new features that have been added. Turn printouts are laser printed and customised to each players empire to ensure the best possible appearance. GALAXY is a game for empire builders, people who like large games with great scope.

Features include: Two way alliances with ratings from 1 to 100 that provide variable benefits, Automated World and Ship production systems, Taxation and World Revolt, Reserve Fleets that are triggered during a turn in response to events, Extended combat resolution system where battles can last from turn to turn, Empire Ship Designs and individual Flagship Fleet Designs, six areas of technology, Empire Servitude, Probes, Spies, Super Spies, Ambassadors, Trade, Gifts, Fortress Stars, Blackholes, Ringworlds, Dyson Spheres, Chained HSP Jumps, FTL Jumps, Looting, bombarding, invasion and much more.

We are currently updating the rule book so for a free copy of the OLD rule book please write or ring.

GALAXY turn fees are as follows: turns 1-10 - \$6 each, turns 11-30 - \$7 each and each turn after 30 - \$8.00 each. Year and full game accounts apply. Standby positions are available in the current game at \$30.00 for the first 10 turns, then normal fees after that, once you are happy you have survived.

The Australian Wizard: PO Box 1171 STAFFORD QLD 4053.
Ph 07 350 4406 or FAX 07 856 4284.

FROM THE REALMS CAMPAIGN OF UNAE

GREATER BAIMIOPIA

By Ogden, Whitt & Taber.

You want me to tell of Greater Baimiopia? I have seen their cities. These arrogant, bigoted people are so involved in their own world, they have only just woken up to the real world outside. Their god and father Krienta must surely be appalled at his children, church and their two faced ways. My fellows and I are.

Who are we to judge you ask?

We are of Wair-Rae.

We are a power, unlike the breeder Heletians, and if you doubt me now you won't when you see what tomorrow may bring. I'm a good friend of the High King you know. And I can tell you if the sun will rise tomorrow...

...or not!

-Forwao, Elven Charlatan

UNAE

Realms has been detailing our own systemless fantasy world since issue 7. We presented the first in a series of 'source' articles in issue 11 detailing the *Kramer Confederation*. The following is the second installment, future issues will see *Evora*, *Flelland*, *Kalraith* and *Wair-Rae* detailed.

THE BIRTH OF GREATER BAIMIOPIA

The greatest member state of the Heletian League is the sprawling nation of Greater Baimiopia. The foundations of this power can be traced back over twelve centuries, to the city of Karano and in particular to when it conquered the neighbouring cities of Jarlos and Horta, creating the first Heletian state.

Over the next two centuries the population swelled as other Heletians sought the higher grounds of the prosperous kingdom, escaping the rising seas behind them. Eventually the sea level stabilised leaving Horta a crowded port on the edge of the delta of the river Sidian. These same events left Karano submerged and Jarlos overcrowded. Jarlos gradually fell into decay and ruin under incompetent rule while Horta claimed the title of capital.

The territories of this first kingdom had already started spreading up the Sidian Valley out of disorganised necessity. The first battles against the Ogre Clans (see issue

12) had been fought and won, the pressures of overpopulation pushing the Heletians upriver. One thousand years ago the lands as far up stream as the first major fork were Heletian, then the kingdom was still known as the Kingdom of Karano. Eight hundred years ago the land as far as the second fork was also Karano's, but growth was slowed and gradually the new cities and towns along the river became more independent of one another. This chaotic time lasted for centuries, expansion was slow and Heletian society nearly stalled.

The rise from a group of independent cities to the most powerful nation in the Heletian League can be dated from the incarnation of Kreinta. Five hundred and thirteen years ago the Heletian god, Kreinta trod the streets of his peoples cities as the young man Baimio, he welded the river cities into a single people and led them deeper into the fertile expanses of the Sidian Rift Valley (see issue 12).

From these humble beginnings the resurrected Kingdom of Karano became a power occupying much of the rift valley and several islands in the Maroklara Sea.

With the passing of the mortal incarnation of Krienta (Baimio) 493 years ago his grieving people who had worshipped him as a god renamed the kingdom after Baimiopia, the holy city and capital he had founded. So, it was when King Giorgi was crowned, he was named the first King of Greater Baimiopia. The kingdom had immense agrarian wealth and the mountains surrounding it were laden with riches. Now, five centuries after Baimio's passing the ogre threat is largely diminished (see issue 12) and Greater Baimiopia is indeed a land blessed by Kreinta.

Such wealth does not come without a price though. Periodic earthquakes, frequent floods and virulent diseases have plagued human life in the valley. Even after seven centuries of constant warfare the ogre clans are still a menace, raiding the valley from heavily fortified mountain strongholds.

Such hardship would have broken the spirit of many people but not the Greater Baimiopians. Bouyed by strong family ties and a strong religion the hardships they have faced have only served to temper them as a people. Possessed of great strength of character they are flexible, quick to adapt to new conditions and threats. In the words of the Elven Seer Sharas-Jach who studied the Ogre Wars, this is the *Ogre's Gift* to the Greater Baimiopians.

THE CHURCH OF BAIMIOPIA

The Church has immense power and influence over Krienta's people and culture. It can be seen and felt throughout the nation and well beyond.

The rural folk have nothing but their religion and family life to sustain them through the daily grind and are the most devout, relying on the fact that the Beyond holds much more for them than the present. The Church is able to exert much influence over the ignorant masses because of this and does so with cynical abandon.

The peasants are milked for every florin they can spare, buying penances and Holy favours, most of which are valueless trinkets. The wealthiest amongst the lower classes are gulled with the sale of relics, purportedly taken from the bodies of saints and martyrs, but which are more likely to be from the bodies of thieves and paupers.

The Church has a vested interest in maintaining and exploiting the fears and superstitions of the peasantry. Its hold over these people is strengthened by acting as the only source of news. The peasants are kept in ignorance about many things and are blatantly misinformed about others. Distrust of strangers is high and anyone accused of heresy can expect, at best, a stoning at the hands of an angry mob, at worst a bone-fire.

The hold the Church exerts over the townsfolk (guildsmen, small time merchants and craftsmen) is not so much one of fear as of indulgence. The Church is a matter of choice, many busy artisans and merchants are too busy to attend church, instead preferring to sleep in on their day of rest, or earn an extra florin by working and getting ahead of the competition.

The monarchy and nobility seem to care little for the influence of the Church, the hand in hand friendship between the state and the Church was a long time ago. The nobles of the present see religion as merely a part of their lives they can include or exclude as they wish. Largely educated by the Church, most of the nobility are familiar enough with the priesthood to see them as human beings. This has led to the nobility developing a relationship with the Church which is more one of mutual convenience than of piety and respect.

The Church guards its position in Greater Baimiopian society jealously. They maintain their position by rigidly controlling the population (especially in rural areas) through fear, superstition and hatred. No other religions are permitted within the land

and those who worship a god other than Kreinta or his saints do so quietly. Any who speak out against the Church are labelled heretics and cleansed. New or unusual thoughts and practices are often labelled blasphemous and practitioners punished.

The primary opposition the Church faces are the Kults. Many who have been renounced by the Church eventually find their way into one of these groups. The Kults exact a high price on their members, but it is said to be rewarding. At the very least they do provide a refuge. Naturally enough the Kults are proscribed by the Church and King's Law and they meet in secret since membership is punishable by death.

The Church needs a strong arm to enforce its edicts and root out these Kults:

THE ORDER DES SANKTA GLAVOS

The Sankta Glavos (Holy Swords) are a military order established almost five hundred years ago by the Church to protect itself from any who would do it harm. The Order evolved out of a Krienta following warrior cult which had existed since the earliest times of Heletian settlement.

Hard, pious men, the Knights commence training in the order at a young age as squires. From the moment of entry their every thought, word and deed is expected to be in the service of Kreinta. They will be found at the forefront of any conflict, protecting the Church and nation from harm.

The Knights are governed by a Grand Marshal who is subject only to the Holy Benefice of the Church. As with all Church Orders they are exempt from taxes. They also maintain several fortresses and a small fleet of vessels.

The Order's reputation as the most feared shock troops in Dormetia is well deserved as centuries of constant warfare have honed their skills to the point where there are few who can stand against them. The Sankta Glavos have been accused of being arrogant and unyielding in their faith, of holding themselves above those less devout. Their accusers are right.

MODERN HISTORY

Since the establishment of the modern state of Greater Baimiopia 493 years ago the history of the kingdom is one of petty politics, power struggles, local insurrections, plague, famine and earthquakes. While these events are not unique to any nation several less 'simple' elements of the nations history are. These are detailed below and have had very powerful effects on the Greater Baimiopian psyche, from the King and Holy Benefice, down to the peasants of the Sidian.

PRABESK MEDINA - EVORA

In 392EK the Sidian Plague swept across the kingdom. Thousands died and many more were slaughtered as suspected carriers. It was not long before the plague reached the capital, Baimiopia, shortly after which the entire royal family succumbed. The Church were unable (some say unwilling) to effect a cure, saying it was all in the hands of



Kreinta. In desperation King Giovanni turned to the Prabesk embassy for aid.

The ambassador, Hassan Qadir, was said to be many things - doctor, duelist, diplomat and scholar. When asked to assist the Turamora's he did so with no reservations. He and his staff worked day and night, caring for the King and his family in spite of the Church's dire mutterings. The King survived and so did most of his family.

The royal family were not the only members of the nobility to contract the plague. Medina, far from the centres of learning and medicine, suffered a great loss of life. Death herself swept across the island, harvesting souls gleefully, many died. In the north the land lay untitled and ungoverned. To the south, protected by the Deipraesidio Mountains and luck, things were better, although fear of the plague was rampant.

Faced with the need to reward the ambassador and his staff, as well as to restore order to Medina, the King elevated Qadir to the nobility and awarded him the twelve duchies of northern Medina. Displeased with the Church, King Giovanni also permitted the Prabesk Dukes religious freedom within their duchies. The state of Prabesk Medina, renamed *Evora* by Hassan Qadir was born. Over the next decade the duchies continued to grow and prosper. Settlers, encouraged by the Qadir's were eager to come from their Prabesk homelands while Heletians, still fearful of the plague refused to settle the 'cursed' region. The state existed under Greater Baimiopian rule until the death of King Giovanni (403EK).

When Queen Maria succeeded her father to the throne, the Dukes of Evora refused to renew their oaths and declared their land to be independant of the Kingdom. Maria threatened to forcibly reclaim the duchies and began to mobilise her armies. Within weeks a large fleet set out for Evora. On arrival she found the port of Nerva blockaded. Ignoring advice to the contrary, Maria then attempted to order her armies through the Deipraesidio Mountains from the south. She had not realised the extent to which the passes had been fortified and had underestimated the strength of the Prabesk. After staggering losses Maria conceded that Evora was too strong to reclaim. Shortly after this episode Maria was taken ill and placed discreetly in an asylum. Her brother, Lucia was crowned King.

Evora has since this time normalised relations with Greater Baimiopia, managing to juggle the niceties of diplomacy and the florins of trade. There are those in the Church who see Evora as a land that needs to be purified and are already working towards such goals. One formidable part of Evora is their Cabal, mages are very numerous in Prabesk society, and so too are they in Evora.

THE CABALIST CONSPIRACY

A little more than a hundred years ago mages were held in high esteem. Powerful, mysterious men they acted as advisors to the king and served in his wars and moved in the highest circles. They were welcomed almost anywhere they went.

One place they were not welcome were

the holy halls of the Church. The Church shunned the mages, preaching against their 'unnatural' ways, alluding that in some way the mages derived their power from dealings with devilish forces such as the much feared Horned God. Most, including King Lucia, dismissed these ravings as the rantings of a few old men jealously guarding their own power. The King reacted by granting the Cabal greater freedoms, placing them higher in his court and shaking the fact in the face of the Holy Benefice.

Those who did not ignore the Church's warnings - the Sanka Glavos - watched the Cabal closely.

Despite the freedoms granted them, or perhaps because of them, the Cabal became greedy. They sought more and more power, spreading a web of influence across Greater Baimiopia and the Heletian League. They purchased lands and businesses, lent money to influential people, financed trading ventures and more. As they grew in power they began to speak out against the outdated practices of the Church, challenging its authority, even establishing schools.

As tensions rose between them, the Church increased its campaign against the mages, charging them as being in league with devils. In time, King Lucia began to worry that the mages should be curbed, but he was at a loss for how it could be done.

Then the Grand Marshal of the Sanka Glavos, Silva Carpini, came before the King. He brought with him a contingent of thirty knights and a prisoner. The prisoner wore the robes of a wizard and had been brutally tortured. Before the King the prisoner was made to repeat his astounding confession. He and other mages of the Cabal had plotted to kill the King and take over the kingdom. As detail after detail was revealed to him the King's anger grew. When he could listen no more he ordered the Knights to butcher the prisoner and rid the land of all Cabalists.

Within days the King's anger had faded and he began to wonder if he had been manipulated by the Knights and the Church. By that time it was too late to reverse the edict. Most mages had been executed by vengeful Knights. Those that had survived had either fled or were in hiding. Many of the latter, when found, were torn to pieces by mobs incited by local priests. This time became known as *The Expulsion*.

The purge was not limited to Greater Baimiopia alone. Prompted by events, and urged by the Church, most other Heletian nations expelled their mages, never to return on pain of death. Many of these found refuge within Burvoy or Evora. A few went into hiding in the Kramer Confederation, a state run by merchants who could see potential profits in magic. The majority found refuge with the Pirate Lords of the Maroklara.

THE PIRATE WARS

With the expulsion of the Cabalists from many nations in the Heletian League the pirate fleets that had plagued the Maroklaran Sea since time immemorial became an even worse threat. The addition of a large number

of desperate and revenge hungry mages to the fleet made them more dangerous, while their prey lacked any means of defending against magical attack. Within three years of the Expulsion (412 EK) the pirates ruled the seas and trade was at a virtual standstill.

The only vessels to get through were members of heavily defended convoys or those escorted by the magic using Prabesk of Evora. Greater Baimiopia was hard hit by the stagnation of trade, isolated by rugged mountain ranges, overland caravans needed a good measure of luck to travel through dangerous passes and deep forests, running a gauntlet of bandits, goblins and ogres.

In the year 418EK the League Council determined that the situation could no longer be tolerated. A huge fleet was massed from the combined navies of Greater Baimiopia, the Kramer Confederation and Lixus. This fleet lured the pirates into a great sea battle. Losses were high on both sides but in the end the League prevailed. The surviving pirate vessels fled to their hidden strongholds to lick their wounds, leaving, according to legend, a virtual treasure trove of enchanted weapons within the sunken wrecks off the coast of Albuscaut.

While the Heletian fleet had won the battle it was not a complete victory. The strongholds remained and many pirate vessels were still at large. It has taken decades but the Pirate Lords of the Maroklara are once more becoming a serious threat. Most vessels in the fleet count a mage amongst the crew. The larger, more successful ships are captained by mages.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE KINGDOM

Greater Baimiopia is of course the Sidian Valley and the River Sidian. Other elements of the nation are several islands of the Maroklara and the south eastern portions of the island of Medina. The Heletian Spine, a vast mountain range running down the east side of the Sidian Valley is an immense natural barrier to the eastern coast, but it is also problematic as the rugged range is home to the core of Ogre Clan society. Various mountain ranges in Greater Baimiopia such as the Darners and the Sidian Alps have funnelled the growth of the kingdom up the valley and dictated its evolution. The valley itself is generally flat with the occasional rolling hills that seem to do little else but steer its great rivers. The valley was originally largely forested, but the slash and burn tactics of Heletian farmers who have an inherent fear of the darkly menacing deciduous forests has seen that mile after mile of the valley has been cleared. It is in such dark, untouched forests that the goblin tribes still live and various Ogre Clans maintain fortress towns. It is also in such places that renegade settlements of Heletians have sprung up, such as the townsites of Kultists or bandits.

Rivers and indeed water dominate the valley. Due to this river barges are an important and quick part of the transport system, consequently so too are river locks, where barges must pay tolls to pass.

LIFE IN GREATER BAIMIOPIA

While the outside world may look upon Greater Baimiopia with envy, life there is not easy except for the privileged few. The cities are hotbeds of corruption, poverty and crime ruled over by callous lords who care little for the populace. In the countryside indentured peasants, serfs and slaves work the land and in spite of the fertile fields often go hungry. The countryfolk are caught between the harsh demands of the Church and King. What they do not lose in taxes they are expected to donate to the Church.

Despite the obvious hardships, life in Greater Baimiopia is stable. Ruled by the House of Turamora and the Baimiopian Church the land is largely untroubled by war, even the threat posed by the ogres is now contained. Unfortunately, this may change in the near future. King Giovanni II is elderly and in poor health and his heir, Prince Mathius, is said to be involved with a Kult of the Horned God. The Church suspects his involvement and does not wish to see him succeed to the throne. If the King dies before naming another heir the resulting conflict could tear the fabric of Greater Baimiopian society apart.

THE HELETIAN LEAGUE

The Heletian Trading League was founded 211 years ago by Greater Baimiopia, the Kramer Confederation and Lixus. It was no doubt at the time meant to be a mechanism by which King Troy would gain control over all Heletian nations, unfortunately the League instead became dominated by merchants and their guilds. The Heletian League encompasses all eight sovereign Heletian states, consequently it is a huge power in its own right, in trade terms. The League has never gathered political strength, and in this sense is often made a puppet of Greater Baimiopia. For more information on the League see issue 11.

THE MAJOR CITIES

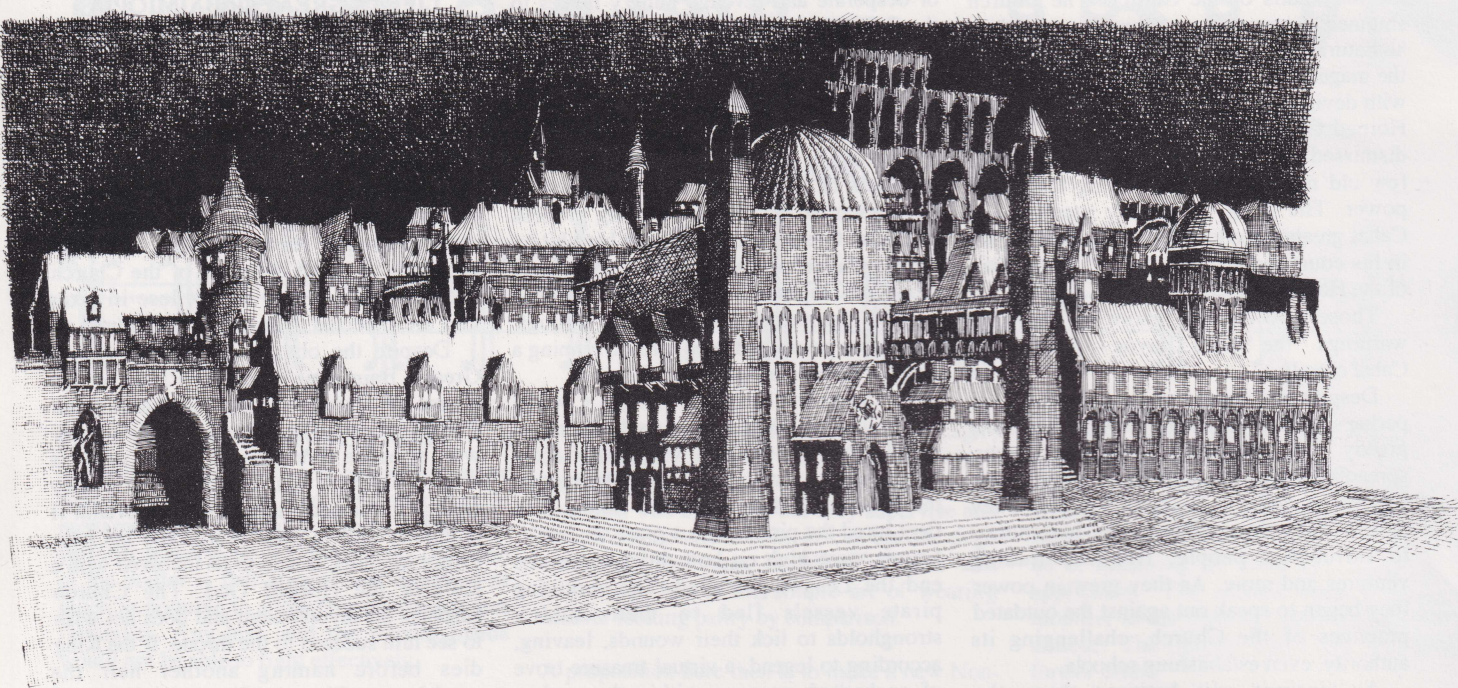
While the cities of Greater Baimiopia are too numerous to detail, all major centres are briefly discussed below. Remember that while there may be dozens of large cities in the kingdom, the bulk of the population and adventure is in the countryside.

BAIMIOPIA

If Greater Baimiopia is the crown of the Heletian League, then the city of Baimiopia is the jewel in that crown. Founded some five centuries ago by the mortal incarnation of Kreinta, Baimio, the city is home to more than 160,000.

Circled by a massive white washed wall the city appears to shine from a distance. From the wall's towers fly the flag of the royal House of Turamora. Churches, palaces, monuments and the tombs of past kings grace the avenues of the inner city, marking the city as old and self important. A monument to the Turamora dynasty.

At the centre of the inner city is the Forum, a meeting place for the scholarly, powerful, noble and the world. The Forum



for all of its magnificent size is a haphazard mess as each king has tried to outdo the previous by building an ever bigger, more impressive icon to his rule, creating a forest of marbled architectural chaos.

The Forum is a place where one can see great philosophers, lawyers and politicians, right next to street vendors, pick pockets, drunken city guards and beggars. Viewed from above, the fine Turasoan marble paving of the Forum forms the holy sign of the Baimiopian Church and is flanked by the four symbols of Greater Baimiopian power - the Cathedral, Palace, Citadel and University. About the Forum are arrayed the *Circle* and *Outer* districts of the city.

Beyond the Forum, in the *Circle*, lie the many townhouses of any family worthy of note. The wealthy and noble maintain households in the city, a symbol of their importance. Many of these homes stand empty for much of the year, being maintained by servants in perpetual readiness for a visit by the master.

Beyond the *Circle* is the *Outer*. It is here that the avenues give way to the chaotic lanes and homes of the common people. It is in the *Outer* that one will find the cheap boarding houses, the taverns, brothels and drug dens. This is the true face of Baimiopia.

Walking the streets of the city is a strange experience. The pious wear the subdued garments encouraged by the Church, while others in the *Outer* wear what they please or what's good for business and often on late summer nights of the week long *Tergai* festival little at all. Baimiopia is always alive and the streets crowded. The only respite comes every *Dimanco* (holy day) when the citizens respect the Church's day of rest.

In this crowded city beggars do not line the streets crying for alms. There is no need of begging since no-one in Baimiopia is poor; poverty is a crime here. Those who

cannot afford to live in the city are simply not allowed to do so. Paupers, the homeless and debtors are all found homes - in the slave pens or in the galleys of the fleet. Crime is uncommon on the streets, it is reserved for the corrupt city and Church officials.

PORTO BAIMIO

Porto Baimio is the oldest city in the land (it was originally named *Horta*, and reputedly settled over thirteen centuries ago). It is second only to Baimiopia in power but exceeding it in size (pop 270,000) and situated on the Grand Channel. The city is perfectly placed to control access from the Karano Sea to the Sidian Valley. Here sea-ships unload their cargoes, transferring them to river barges and ships that take them upstream and into the Sidian valley.

Within Porto Baimio foreign traders are free to conduct business as they please as nowhere else in Greater Baimiopia. Here are quarters of the city where elves pretentiously walk the streets, where Prabesk merchants work alongside Fletlanders, Burvois, Litovaks, Saldaens and even Dwarves.

Porto Baimio is a city of avarice and sin. Normally the Church would have a great deal to say regarding this situation, but Bishop Eberado is silent in the matter, turning a blind eye to his *cousin's* (Duke Donato Ferraro) activities. Curiously enough, six of the last eight bishops of Porto Baimio, have been members of the Ferraro family. Those who weren't didn't survive long enough to make any difference. Kreinta, it would appear, smiles on the Ferraros.

THAPSUSS

This coastal city of 54,000 is known as the *Summer City* as it enjoys long mild summers which see many (such as the royal family) head to the city's *Upper Circle* for

several weeks each year, using it as a summer retreat. The common folk ignore the coming and going of such distinguished guests as they are all too used to it, plus the city has several other growing concerns. Thapsuss is ruled by a lord who was elevated to the nobility by the grateful Turamora's, indeed the city as a whole seems to be loaded with Turamora associates and relatives, from the Dean of the University to the local Benefice.

The city's current problems revolve around a recent string of murders in the dock areas. City patrols have stumbled upon many victims, all murdered in the same way - with one grievous sword wound in the abdomen and a strange bruise on the forehead. The stakes have been raised recently with several priests and even the captain of the city watch being found dead. Adding to the problem is the appearance of the purple sashed radicals from the church's Heletite Order of missionaries. Such radicals preach of the evils of foreigners and wizards, stirring trouble and dissent.

Thapsuss enjoys a healthy fishing industry. It also is a drop off point for goods destined for the Kramer city of Zarustra (by land) from ships which are unwilling to make the sea journey and risk pirate raids.

The city is also being drained by constant requests from villages and towns for protection from '*the green men*' as the elders call them. A tribe of goblin raiders have taken up residence in the Darner Mountains.

TURASO

Turaso is famed for its marble and steel. The city was founded four centuries ago and has prospered since, it houses 49,000.

One of the most well known exports from Turaso is its steel, called *Rose Steel*. Named after the blooming rose that is etched upon each blade or piece of armour to be crafted

The city itself is steeped in its history of battle and weapon crafting, with native Turasians seeming to be overly aggressive and brutal to other Heletians. Little wonder it is also said that within the city hides the High Priest of the Horned God, it being the centre of the *Invisible Empire*. While none speak openly of such things Duke Tonius Gama is together with the local Benefice investigating several individuals.

LOMBARO

The city is said to run itself, the halls of power are often vacant. Duke Damon Appiano is not often to be found in residence. Whispers from the halls of the various guilds in the city tell of a dark plot to topple none other than King Giovanni II and install the House Appiano on the throne. Such stories are followed by rumours that the family has forsaken Krienta's church and embraced the foreign gods of the Prabesk, others yet tell of the family having a pact with the Horned God itself!

The city seems to be a peaceful place on the surface though there are a great many reminders from its bloody past. Many buildings in the city are built for defense, they stand as testament to the ferocity of the campaigns of four centuries ago when the Ogre Wars passed through the area. But that is in the past, today the city is a great regional trading centre. Settlements further south along the River Sidian, the farming communities of the area, the timber merchants and the local fur trade all make great use of Lombardo's markets.

Over a century ago the city was a centre for learning in the ways of wizardry, the Expulsion ended that, seeing several cellars and attics sealed and then forgotten. Lombaro is built upon a stockpile of research, something various factions in Greater Baimiopia are only just discovering.

OTHER CITIES

Above is summarised information for the other smaller cities of Greater Baimiopia.

TERRORS IN GREATER BAIMIOPIA

The history of the Sidian Valley has been a bloody affair for the past millenium, and it would seem that there is centuries of such bloodshed ahead. Foes such as the Ogre Clans (see issue 12), Goblin tribes and human adversaries such as bandits or kultists are but a few. On top of this there are many wild beasts that call the primeval forests, deep blue seas or rugged mountains home, and older things beneath.

MAGIC - THE CABAL

Since the time of the Expulsion the magi of the Greater Baimiopian branch of the Helietian Cabal has been greatly weakened. From thousands of practitioners over a century ago the network now has less than ninety members who are currently training one hundred and fifty apprentices. Many say that there

was never a conspiracy in the past, but these same people know that there is one *now* and that it is slowly approaching its climax.

The wielders of wizardry in Greater Baimiopia dare not cast in public for fear of being lynched by ignorant peasants. The situation is somewhat better in the larger cities of Porto Baimio, Thapsuss and Eandi, but still care should be taken.

RUMOURS

It is said that King Giovanni II is trying to arrange a marriage between his only son and heir Prince Mathius and the Lord of Lixus's daughter, Lady Anna Adrien. Her father, Lord Roberto Adrien is said to favour such an engagement as it would join the two nations together. He understands that Lixus can aspire to no higher greatness than to be

associated directly with the home of the holy church, his one true love in life. But, there is much talk of the doings of the House of Turamora as it is at its weakest in centuries. Consequently much of this talk tells of plots to depose the family by rivals.

Other happenings in the kingdom vary from the constant conflicts with the Ogre Clans, to the searches for abandoned ogre cities by loot hungry vagabonds. Such events are spread among plots by dozens of organisations working for the same goal, power. Bandits, priests, nobles, merchants, cabalists, kultists and other stranger things, all strive for influence over Baimiopia, and thus the kingdom and finally the Heletian League.

The year is 513 EK, it is early winter ☉

City	Name	Pop.	Ruler	Produce
Catania	18,000	Countess Fatima Delano	Farming	
Narino	31,000	Count Elio Mazzini	Mining (Coal & Iron)	
Monsudicia	27,000	Duke Laris Virivallo	Carpentry, Ship Builders	
Biam	19,000	Count Lorenzo Biammia	Textile, Lace, Sheep	
St Augustine	15,000	Count Dante Reconda	Fishing, Farming	
St Silva	21,000	Duke Alberto Donatodi	Timber & Farming*	
Lavarina	15,000	Count Ravelin Alembert	Mining, Farming*	
Tharrus	26,000	Duchess Karina Veganova	Olives, Glass, Fishing	
Aurelia	38,000	Duke Javas Boullier	Fishing & Farming	
Albuscaut	18,000	Duke Marcus Cappoli	Fishing	
Eandi	40,000	Duke Bodan Benevito	Trade, Fishing & Farming	
Argentia	15,000	Count Tony Argenti	Mining	
Corium	15,000	Countess Dori Occasapunta	Smuggling, Honey, Fishing	
Silvarcis	17,000	Count Gorgi Savila	Timber, Furs, Farming	
Bastiano	25,000	Duke Gianni Bastiano	Mining, Fishing	
Rapoli	33,000	Grand Duke Jule Turamora	Wines, Education, Farming	

* Frontier cities in areas of conflict between Heletians and the Ogre Clans. Large numbers of Des Sankta Glavos are stationed in each city.



THE WAY OF THE WOLF

An Interview with White Wolf's Stewart Wieck

Where are your and White Wolf's roots?

Our roots, are in storytelling, and we create and sell storytelling games. We will eventually tackle storytelling in other formats as well, but roleplaying is a fascinating interactive style of storytelling, and a kind of software that requires no hardware other than the simple rules themselves. Our storytelling roleplaying games differ from most other roleplaying games in at least one fundamental sense - we have created a world not a game. Our **World of Darkness** is almost top-heavy with mood, characters, themes, and plots. In short, the elements required of a good story.

What's important to you?

This is a difficult question for me personally right now as I'm going through a fairly transition in terms of my role at White Wolf. We recently hired Stephan Wieck as President of White Wolf and he has taken over the day-to-day and management reins of the company. Steve has an excellent vision for what White Wolf can be and is making sure we can meet his long term goals by shoring up some short term problems. This means I'm free to take on a role similar to what Mark's has been. That is, pursue new ventures and projects that are consistent with our overall vision for White Wolf.

What this basically boils down to is that in many ways I'm searching for a direction right now. Some of what is important to me in a human sense has been written into **Mage**, but it's difficult for some things to translate into game terms and still create a game that is fun and playable. **Mage** succeeds, I think, because there are some wonderful game and storytelling ideas in it, like coincidental magick and some of the trappings of magick like the Foci, but some of the deeper issues I try to connect the game to just would not translate to this format. In the end this was frustrating because in a few instances I thought I found ways to make the connections, but playtesters thought otherwise and the ideas were smoothed into more interesting game terms.

In the sense of what White Wolf can do, I think we're important to roleplaying because we push the envelope of games quite a bit. Some distributors and retailers have had problems with some of our products, and in a few cases for legitimate reasons from their perspective since our products could have been the cause for local retailers to break the law and the law is serious business when you're operating a business, but I think some people are a little worried about what we do simply because of what it is and how that doesn't agree with who they are. No one can deny, though, that White Wolf is spreading the gospel of roleplaying games to a whole new audience.

Roleplaying is art, and it's ridiculous to imagine this art form kowtowing to the demands of a conservative audience. Or any audience that tries to put limitations on it. White Wolf is exploring what roleplaying can do and how it connects with the archetypes of storytelling.

Where is the Storyteller Series of games heading?

In terms of products, we move from **Mage: The Ascension** to the as yet unsubtitled **Wraith**. This game is our new name for **Ghost** and has been moved for release in 1994 instead of 1995 for two basic reasons: 1) we're anxious to tackle this more intense game in 1994, which we are dubbing "The Year of the Vampire," and 2) we have huge plans for **Changeling** (the new name for **Faerie**) and need the extra year to get everything ready. We are also pursuing some interesting projects to put some spins on the World of Darkness.

Tell us about MAGE, how similar is it to VAMPIRE & WEREWOLF?

Well, it's obviously a Storyteller Game, so it immediately connects with both **Vampire** and **Werewolf** in terms of game system. More important, though, is the storytelling angle. **Mage** adds a lot to the World of Darkness. Magick is certainly found throughout the World of Darkness, but in **Vampire** and **Werewolf** we discuss it purely in terms of the specific powers that Kindred and Garou possess. In **Mage**, we obviously have to tackle magick more directly. Consequently, **Mage** paints a bigger picture of the reality of the World of Darkness than either **Vampire** or **Werewolf** do. In fact, the view of our world has widened with the release of each game. **Vampire** dealt exclusively with gothic-punk elements of the world. **Werewolf** expanded to create an entire cosmology. This worldview turns out to be flawed, though this makes it no less real. Garou simply don't take everything into account. Their view is completely consistent with their goals and black-and-white world of Wyrms, Weaver and Wyld, but there are shadings to reality. That's where **Mage** comes in, because the Ascension aspect of the game is all about a mage discovering more and more about the ultimate truth of reality. This is not to say that a Nexus Crawler is any less dangerous to a mage than it is to a Garou who has personified the beast's existence into that Wyrms form!

Mage is also similar in that mages lead a somewhat tragic existence. Kindred must struggle to maintain their humanity and werewolves have the "honour" of fighting a war, defending against the Apocalypse, that is almost certainly destined to occur. Vampires and werewolves both fight losing

battles. So do mages. They fight the Technomancers – mages whose power, whose kind of magick, is the technology that rules the modern world. Mages must also contend with the despair of trying to save men and women who largely couldn't care less about the mages' goals and might even resist them if they knew what would happen to their world. But that's the catch, these "Sleepers" as we call them, don't really understand what's truly at stake. If they could just understand what was being done to their world, then they would be able to fight the Technocracy as well. The fact that they don't fight back is clear indication that the Technomancers have firm control of the situation.

You've spent a great deal of time working on MAGE, describe for us what you consider the most important elements of the game?

There are several central themes to the game. Among these are the difference between science and technology and how modern cultures have mistaken one for the other, the ability of people to create their own reality, and how these two combine as part of the realisation that these are different realities. Wade Davis writes in his book *Shadows in the Sun*: "Just to know that nomadic hunters exist, that jaguar shaman yet journey beyond the Milky Way, that the myths of the athabaskan elders still resonate with meaning, is to remember that our world does not exist in some absolute sense but rather is just one model of reality." People of modern cultures have forgotten a lot of what life is because of the life they are living. Things could be different if we wanted them to be different, and that's what **Mage** is about. It's about people with very fictional power to do it on their own – to change things without the help of a hundred thousand other people.

There are two important elements for **Mage** as a game: the metaphysics and the magick system. The former is important because it has to connect the new magick system with the cosmology established in the previous Storyteller games. Metaphysics gains power in terms of a story when it helps create stories. The metaphysics of **Mage** does this by making complete sense out of what magick is and how it works. With such a solid base to operate from, Storytellers can go anywhere with the elements of the game.

The magick system is powerful for a couple of reasons. First, it's a non-spell-based system that allows characters to do literally anything they can think of (assuming the character has the knowledge too!). More importantly, it encourages storytelling by putting the onus of gaining the benefits of using coincidental magick on the players, so they must become part of the storytelling process if they want their characters to be capable of the most dangerous and powerful effects. Too often in other games there is a line between power-gaming and storytelling; players decide to play the game one way or the other. In **Mage** the styles become the same thing.

Is White Wolf working on any major projects at the moment aside from the Storyteller games, or are they the only major focus for the company?

No way!

Again, there are some things that I can't talk about, but we are actually looking at a couple of interesting licenses at the moment. Mark and I have previously been of the mind to create our own properties and let other people/companies license them from us, but we are looking at some things that would be too fun to pass up. Fun's the reason people play games, and if a story can be told, then White Wolf will be there.

I can talk about my current main focus – fiction. In December



Stewart Wieck
-During a Full Moon.

this year, we will release our first mass market fiction. We've already done one book of fiction for **Werewolf** (*Drums Around the Fire*), but this December will see the beginning of continuous fiction releases. The specifics of our fiction plans are still up in the air a bit as well, but it looks like we will print a shared world anthology series set in the World of Darkness. The first book, the December 1993 release, is called *The Beast Within*, and it establishes many of the vampire characters of the shared world. The second book, *When Will You Rage*, does the same for Garou, and the third, *Truth Until Paradox*, does likewise for mages. After these three have been released, the anthology series will begin to jumble the types of characters involved and we'll probably even introduce Wraiths and Changelings before those games have been released (August 1994 and August 1995 respectively).

There's a lot of other exciting fiction news as well. For instance, White Wolf may soon become the publisher for the critically-acclaimed *Borderlands* anthologies edited by Tom Monteleone. The first two volumes of this series have been out of print for a time, and Tom already has volumes 3 and 4 completed. These anthologies feature cutting edge horror stories from authors like Harlan Ellison, Karl Edward Wagner, T.E.D. Klein, and Poppy Z. Brite. You'll see more fiction come out of partnership with Tom Monteleone and other editors as well.

Also, you'll see a continued commitment from White Wolf to our Mind's Eye Theatre line, which was kicked off by **The Masquerade** this summer. We will begin a convention tour in 1994 to help establish ongoing regional games of **The Masquerade** and we will have our own annual Atlanta, Georgia-based Halloween convention in 1994.

Add to all of this planning deals for comic books, computer games and other entertainment, and you'll see that we're doing a lot more than the Storyteller games themselves, though these games will continue to be the focus of the majority of our efforts.

ADVANCE CITADEL ISSUE 10 AUG'93

A Military Simulations Newsletter

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Kaxxa G'zira

Adventure Background for AD&D 2nd Edition's Al Qadim Setting

by Lee Sheppard



*"We come again to Safe Isle's shores,
To strike our sails, and raise our oars,
and go in search of tavern doors,
To drink of ale, and talk of wars."*

- Corsairs Shanty.

In the Crowded Sea, to the south of the Pearl Cities of Jumlat and Gana, lies Kaxxa-G'zira (Kasha-G'zeerah), or "Safe Isle". Just one of hundreds of islands which clutter this expanse of water, Safe Isle would probably be overlooked by one unfamiliar with its many attractions. To those who know these waters well, Kaxxa-G'zira acts as a powerful magnet, drawing bejewelled merchants and fierce corsairs with equal fervour.

Although Kaxxa-G'zira is not named on any maps that come with the Al-Qadim background, this adventure setting can be placed within the area known as the Crowded Sea.

On the Surface

To the new visitor, Safe Isle appears exactly as it sounds - an island where sea travellers of all stations, however noble or insidious, may rest and restock their vessels - no questions

asked. Roughly seventeen miles long and four miles wide at its widest point, Safe Isle has a native population of some 45,000. The large number of ships which can be found in port at any time means double this number can actually be found on the island throughout the year. Much of Kaxxa-G'zira's coastline is inaccessible, taken up with tall sandstone cliffs, but three locations provide safe access for ships of all sizes. Each of these locations has its own harbour, and all are usually full of travellers. The largest can be found in the island's main city, Mar-Ad-Alwar. The other two harbours are much smaller, but provide facilities with no questions asked, allowing corsairs of less reputable nature to off-load their booty without fear of reprisal.

The island has only a small farming community as the majority of Kaxxa-G'zira's land is occupied by its commercial infrastructure. Besides, nearly all of Safe Isle's primary produce needs are supplied by the very vessels the island services. Like most of Zakhara, little rain falls on Kaxxa-G'zira. Even so, the cool breezes that frequently blanket the island help to make it a very pleasant place to live all year round.

Although the island has one supreme ruler, Sultana Ibtisam Bint Asyama, the complexity of the island's economy requires the additional presence of a ruling council, responsible for the administrative and economic concerns of the island. The council of eight represents each of the main factions on the island - two mercantile groups, one councillor from each of the ports, a militia commander and a moralist priest. The Sultana is also accorded a seat on the council; all other members must be elected every three years. Even though she controls all military and religious concerns, in all economic matters, Sultana Ibtisam has only one vote, ensuring that no one individual can dominate the council's direction on matters of the island's wealth.

Each of the island's ports is serviced by its own mercantile community; taverns (for foreigners), coffee-houses, flop houses, trade workshops, money changers and warehouses are found directly adjacent to each wharf. It is possible to completely re-stock vessels at any one of the ports. The southernmost port, Mar-Ad-Eltek even has dry dock facilities, complete with skilled shipwrights able to effect speedy repairs.

The Great Bazaar

Directly adjoining the wharf area of Mar-Ad-Alwar is Kaxxa-G'zira's, and perhaps the Crowded Sea's most infamous tourist attraction. Dominated by the Royal Palace of Sultana Ibtisam Bint Asyama is the Great Bazaar of Kaxxa-G'zira. The Bazaar extends over a square mile and is patronised twenty four hours a day. All manner of goods and pleasures may be bought, many unavailable (or illegal) elsewhere.

The bazaar begins at the water's edge, with ship's crews selling goods direct from the decks of their vessels. In turn, many goods stored in the nearby warehouses are sold to trading vessels for on-selling elsewhere in the Crowded Sea and beyond. These sales are generally of trade goods such as grains, ropes, oils, salted meats and enormous quantities of fish, adding a rather interesting background odour to the waterfront.

As you move away from the wharf, more traditional bargains can be found. It is said that anything can be bought in this part of the Great Bazaar, if you are willing to wait long enough for someone to go and procure it - legally or otherwise! The press and crush of the crowds (up to 30,000 people can be found here at times) is incredible and the noise and heat are intolerable. Imagine five thousand brightly coloured stalls, with each stall holder yelling to outsell his neighbour. Hagglng is a way of life for all Zakharans and the stall holders of Kaxxa-G'zira are amongst the best. It is nearly impossible to visit the Great Bazaar without being convinced of the absolute necessity of owning some completely worthless trinket.

All sorts of characters can be found here, with merchants admonishing customers to buy their wares, Moralist priests warning everyone of the dangers of leaving the path of enlightenment, barbers trimming beards and shaving heads, jugglers and acrobats entertaining the crowds, sprukers inviting young men to visit their dens to taste the cooling sherbet drinks and watch dancing girls cavort, charlatans peddling mendicants and cure-alls, pick-pockets fleecing the unwary, con artists running scams, seasoned mercenaries offering their services, and all with a backdrop of squawking poultry, braying donkeys and complaining mules. Water and fruit sellers do extremely well as they make their way about the bazaar, their water jugs and fruit baskets balanced precariously on heads, as the loss of fluid through constant perspiration must be continuously replaced. For all of its little discomforts, however, the Great Bazaar is an exciting attraction that should not be missed.



At night, the Bazaar undergoes a remarkable transformation, changing from what is primarily, a mercantile venue, to a huge open air restaurant. Thousands of stalls, selling all manner of hot and cold foods, drinks and desserts soon fill the spaces vacated by the earlier stall holders. The smell, noise and general atmosphere generated by such a gathering has to be seen to be believed. In the small hours of the morning many a friendship is made, a heart broken, or a score or two settled.

The streets surrounding the Great Bazaar are filled with coffee houses, workshops and mercantile stores. All operate under licence from the governing council of Kaxxa-G'zira and a strict code of ethics ensures fair play and honest trading for all. This attitude has often lead to conflict with less reputable aspects of the mercantile community, but as yet no major confrontations have occurred between the two groups.

Such a hotchpotch of people and races would normally cause all manner of civil unrest, and Safe Isle is no exception. While the island's strict code of neutrality is maintained by a highly skilled and ruthlessly efficient militia, composed entirely of Outland Warriors, they cannot be everywhere. They therefore tend to concentrate on keeping the larger disputes under control (those between opposing corsair bands for example) and allow minor skirmishes to sort themselves out. In general however, law breakers are not tolerated and they are punished quickly and severely. (For a historical comparison refer to the Varangian Guard of Constantinople).

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between Safe Isle and other locations within the Land of Fate is that, although a great many different races can be found on the island there appears to be no "native" population of genies. The reason for this remains a mystery. As a consequence of this peculiarity, any one who may have an affinity for genies and their kind (a Sha'ir wizard for example) would quickly find themselves the centre of attention.

The Hidden Secrets

To those who really know Kaxxa-G'zira the island's very name is a cruel hoax. Safe Isle is far from safe. The Sultana is in fact a Lamia Noble (see *Monstrous Compendium 2*, or the *Fiend Folio*). Long ago she replaced the true ruler of Kaxxa-G'zira and with the aid of a number of evil Kahin priests, she now uses the excesses of Safe Isle's many visitors to appease her Goddess. Ibtisam worships Aneht (Aach-net), an ancient serpent goddess, whose worshippers were long thought to have been exterminated.

- 1 Temple
- 2 Inner City
- 3 Royal Palace
- 4 Grand Bazaar

Kaxxa G'zira



To all but her most loyal priests (who share her secret), Sultana Ibtisam appears as a stern but just ruler. She is in reality a cruel and evil mistress, delighting in the pleasure the many weaknesses of Kaxxa-G'zira's patrons bring her goddess. Even so, the lamia noble is careful to keep her true purpose and identity secret as she does need the support of the governing council of Kaxxa-G'zira to keep the island running smoothly. She has been very careful not to magically *charm* any on the ruling council other than the militia commander, preferring to use the councillor's own prejudices and greed to her current advantage. Her one weakness is that she is often tempted to appease her goddess personally, usually by selecting a handsome male who takes her fancy and then using him for her carnal pleasure before calmly slitting his throat.

The Militia

The militia are all personally *charmed* by the lamia noble and will obey her orders without question. Because Ibtisam has been very careful in her dealings with the inhabitants of Kaxxa-G'zira (at least for the time being), the general populace are unaware of Sultana Ibtisam's true nature, although a few more intelligent rogues (who do most of their work at night) are becoming suspicious that all is not right within Kaxxa-G'zira.

The average patrol consists of six, with five Mercenary Barbarians and one Sorcerer. The patrol sergeant is a fifth-level fighter with AC2 and a war-axe +1. The remaining warriors are all third-level fighters with AC4 and war-axes and composite bows. The sorcerer will always be at least fourth level and armed with a combination of offensive and protective spells. Larger, hunter-killer patrols are also formed as required. Double the average patrol numbers and add a seventh-level Kahin priest as commander.

The Priests

There are twelve Kahins who know Sultana Ibtisam's true identity. Each is a seventh-level lawful evil human priest who enjoys the many rewards

that serving Ibtisam's goddess can bring. They are not charmed, but have all taken an oath of loyalty (a process which includes the tattooing of a symbol on their chests to represent their devotion to the goddess) and are quite prepared to die if necessary. They are all completely without compassion, and enjoy killing those that oppose their mistress. Three Kahins can be found with Sultana Ibtisam at all times, attending to her wishes.

Possible Scenarios

As well as providing a good starting point for adventures in the Crowded Sea, Kaxxa-G'zira also has the potential to provide a number of adventures based on the island itself. The following section provides one major encounter suggestion for DMs, and a couple of smaller adventure hints that need further development by the referee. Any or all of these suggested scenarios can be played over a period time spent with Safe Isle as a base, or combined into one connected mini-campaign.

The Rescue: While examining the Great Bazaar, the PCs are approached by members of the Silk Hand Thieve's Guild who offer an interesting proposition. A visitor to the island (the characters may or may not be told that the visitor is actually a delegate from the thieve's guild of Jumlat - DMs choice) has been taken by the local militia for questioning, and is being held in the Sultana's Palace dungeon. The thieves are concerned that the visitor may reveal names and locations that could cause damage to the guild. They ask that the party organise a rescue of the delegate, and escort him off the island to safety. The thieves cannot organise a rescue themselves, for fear of being identified in their attempt.

Although Sultana Ibtisam's Palace overlooks the Great Bazaar, the Palace itself is located in a section of the main city that is off limits to the general population. The Inner City contains a number of similarly restricted buildings, including the main militia barracks, a large mosque and number of

private residences. A twenty foot high wall surrounds this section of the city, with guards patrolling the walls and streets by day and night. A strict curfew is imposed on this particular part of the city and trespassers are dealt with severely. The players must find a way of sneaking into the Inner City, find the delegate, and make their way to their ship to ferry the prisoner to safety.

Unfortunately for the PCs, once every full moon, the lamia noble's goddess requires a more violent demonstration of her devotee's loyalty, and a human sacrifice must be performed. As fate would have it, the visiting delegate that the PCs have to rescue is this month's victim. Therefore, when the players eventually make their way into the Palace dungeons, they come across Ibtisam in her 'natural' lamia noble form. The encounter with the lamia noble and her priests, the rescue of the delegate and the pursuit by land and naval forces should provide a few exciting hours of role playing.

Pirate Plans: Sitting in one of the many taverns found near the dock in which the players have their ship, they overhear the crew of a pirate vessel plotting to take a hostage from his home on one of the other small islands near Kaxxa-G'zira and hold him for ransom. It may be that the players have encountered the intended victim before and wish to protect their friend. They can try to sabotage the pirate's plans before they leave Kaxxa-G'zira (which will not be easy as all visitors to Safe Isle come under the "protection" of the militia) or they can try to reach their friend before the pirates make their attack, preparing a suitable reception for the would-be kidnappers.

Idol Worship: The reason that there are no genies on Safe Isle is because of the presence of an ancient idol, worshipped in secret by Ibtisam and her Kahin priests. If one of the PCs is a Sha'ir wizard they may pick up some clues from their gen familiar that something is not right with the island, at least as far as genies are concerned. The discovery of the idol (which is located in a catacomb beneath the island), and the subsequent battle with Ibtisam and her followers make for an exciting encounter.

Trouble: The party can just behave as adventurers normally do and get into trouble anyway. Insulting a local, starting a brawl in a coffee house. Avoiding retribution from the local militia and the attention of Sultana Ibtisam could be an adventure in itself.

May your times in Kaxxa G'zira be interesting. ✦

TRADING GALLERY

LIGHT COMBAT ARMOUR

Shadowrun 2nd Edition
by Tim Smith

Description: Light Combat Armour was originally developed by a runner or Shadowcorp, and has been copied many times. A good armourer may be able to create a suit, and a fixer could possibly sell one (however it would have to be fitted).

Light Combat Armour is carefully designed and manufactured in Individual Suits. The suit is made up of literally hundreds of parts, each of which must be crafted depending on the subject's body shape. Second hand combat armour is nearly useless, and even after fitting, a week of intensive training is needed to completely familiarise oneself with the armour. As no two sets of armour are exactly the same, countless 'variations' exist, such as built-in weapons and sheaths, spikes (for non-stealth versions), grappling hooks, claws, sensors, radios, you name it. It can take weeks to get the suit created anyway, so the comparatively minor effort of variation is worthwhile.

Mechanics: Standard Suit

Ballistic - 4, Impact - 4, Weight - 3, Concealability - 11, Cost 20,000 ¥.

>>>> {Light Combat Armour is usually legally unknown. If you're careful with the 'extras' you can sometimes get it registered as sporting armour. (Doesn't fool the knowledgeable cops, but they can't arrest you for it.) <<<< - **Loophole 16:20:35/07-08-51**

>>>> {For another 5K¥, you can get the suit made completely of polymers. Metal detectors & most x-rays dint see a thing}<<<< - **Stealth Jr 16:22:54/07-08-51**

>>>> {Buddy of mine had his outfitted with Thermo block and padding. also stuck some sort of invisibility on it}<<<< - **Nuke 16:24:17/07-08-51**

>>>> {Did it work?}<<<< - **Stealth Jr 16:25:41/07-08-51**

>>>> {Yeah, great - till an astral corp-mage splattered his brains}<<<< - **Nuke 16:26:30/07-08-51**

MAGEBOLT

An anti-mage spell for Shadowrun 2nd Ed.
by Tim Smith

Mechanics: Combat spell.

Base Damage = Base Drain (B), Physical = F/2+1 (B), Stun = F/2 (B), Restricted - magically active (ie. mages, shamans, spellcasters) F/2-1 (B), adds 1 to target numbers F/2 (B), simple discretionary effect (can be increased) F/2+1 (B).

Drain: Mage Dart (L) (((F/2)+1)L)
Mage Missile (M) (((F/2)+1)L)
Mage Bolt (S) (((F/2)+1)S)
Mage Blast (D) (((F/2)+1)D)

Discussion: This spell decrease the targets link to his Aura. It does this by targeting on the mage's Astrally-Active DNA and represses it. This means the spell has no effect on non-Active Mundanes or on radically inhuman (ie. dog, not vampire) DNA-structures.

The primary use of the spell is to destroy another mage's magical power. However, the effect causes severe pain and disorientation, and later spells were designed to capitalise on that. The effect has been described as 'similar to having the worst hangover of your life, only worse, and without the pleasure beforehand.'

Tactically, this spell is a killer versus Mages. It is resisted with Body (usually low) effects stun (like minor drain and not magically curable) and adds +1 to all magically oriented target numbers. Corp mages use this spell.

SUDDEN DEATH BATTLETECH

Alternative Rules for Battletech
by Robin Issel

Issue 10 was a Battletech special. On page 41 of that issue we printed an article by Robin Issel on how to speed up Battletech by making the weapons more deadly. In line with this, Robin produced a revised Weapons Damage Table which mysteriously disappeared somewhere under an empty take-away curry carton at paste-up time. For all those readers who wrote in asking for the table, here it is (we have washed off the tandoori stains!).

WEAPONS DAMAGE TABLE

Type	Damage Primary	Damage Secondaries	
Small Laser	6	-	
Med Laser	10	-	
Large Laser	16	-	
PPC	20	-	
Autocannon 2	2	1 1 1	
Autocannon 5	5	2 2 2	
Autocannon 10	10	4 4 4	
Autocannon 20	20	7 7 7	
Machine Gun	2	1 1 1	
Flamers	*	** *	See Below
LRM 5	3	2 2 2	& Thumpers
LRM 10	6	3 3 3	& Sniper Cannons
LRM 15	8	5 5 5	
LRM 20	12	6 6 6	& Long Toms
SRM 2	3	1 1 1	& Infantry Rifles
SRM 4	4	3 3 3	& Inf MG's/Flamers
SRM 6	6	4 4 4	& Inf Lasers/SRMs

* A Flamer which done one point of damage to every location except the head and gives the target an extra three heat points. If the target is in Punch Hit Location, all visible locations are hit ie. LA, LT, CT, RT, RA and H, and the target gets 3 heat.



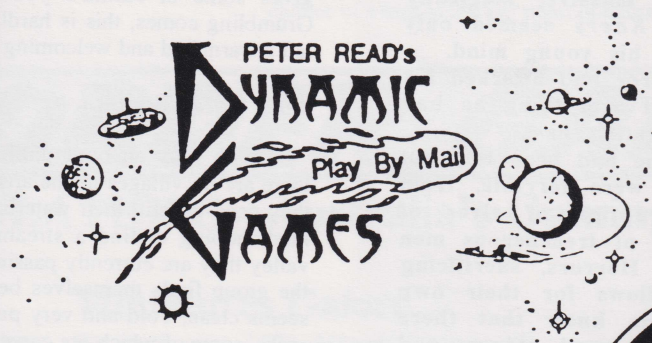
LOST & FOUND

Two of our **Subscribers** have gone missing - their issue 12 copies have been returned by Australia Post. Could anyone knowing the whereabouts of **Leith Daniel**, formerly of St James, WA, and/or **Ross Hucks**, formerly of Yarrabah, QLD, please contact Australian Realms Subscription, PO Box 220, Morley, WA, 6062.

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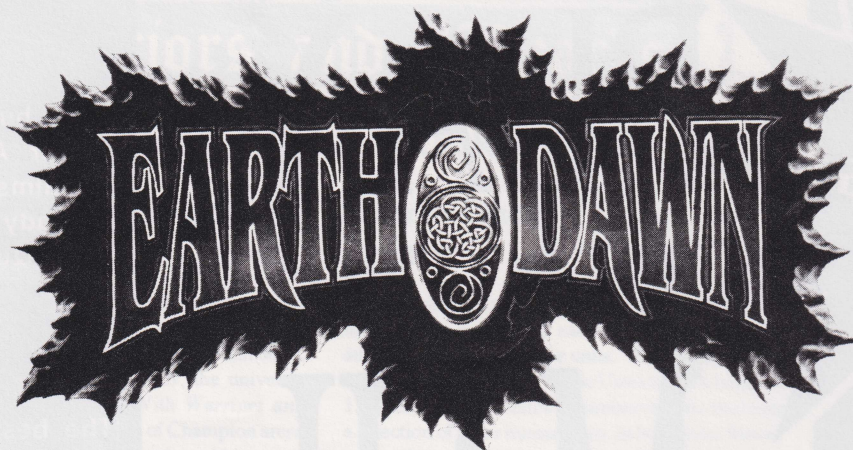
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Jarma's Road: Introductory Adventure For the New Earthdawn Fantasy RPG By Colin Taber

Since he had been a boy all Jarma could remember was the plains and open sky. He also knew -all too well- the stinks and sounds of the new towns. He had once stood outside a Kaer, but it was too dark for him to muster the courage to go inside. His people had been in the open now for 86 years, and the time of the Scourge, when entire populations had hid beneath the earth in massive, magically warded fortifications, *Kaers* seemed only the stuff of legends to his young mind.

That was until a Horror had attacked his town. Then he believed everything he had heard about the devastating past.

Of the many things he had been told but never witnessed most were terrible, from the tale of the corruption of elves of Blood Wood to stories of treacherous men who made pacts with Horrors, sacrificing thousands of their fellows for their own ends. With fear Jarma knew that there were not many tales of good things, and his hope languished, until one clear day he saw the fantastic sky ships of the sky raiders.

Then, at his young but adventurous age he decided he didn't want to work in his fathers smithy. Oh, no, not at all.

He wanted to fly.

Jarma Was a Young, But Talented Man...

This article is an introductory piece for FASA's new Earthdawn game, it is in short a suggestion for a party's first adventure. It is presented here in a simple and brief form and offers as its main strength ideas. From this point much more can be discovered, uncovered and experienced as you and your players create your own legend while exploring Barsaive.

This brief plot starts from the tale of Jarma, a young man whose discipline is the Swordmaster (see Earthdawn page 80). He has turned his back on his home town, seeking instead the excitement and riches of adventuring. To this end he has overcome his childhood fears and played his part in a harsh farewell from Tarson, his home town on the shores of Lake Vors. Setting out to travel to nearby Kratas with several other young townfolk, he hopes to meet with his cousin Caro. Once with Caro, an Illusionist, he plans on establishing

himself by hiring out his talents. And all the while to travel and explore the undiscovered reaches and wonders of Barsaive. Unfortunately, shortly after he sets off from home events unfold that make it certain he shall not quickly get to Kratas or Caro.

A Long, Quiet and Boring Road...

Kratas is eight days travel from Jarma's home town. The first two days of travel are quiet, the group passing only two other groups on the road. A couple of days on a long dull road gives some of Jarma's young companions time to think. Grumbling comes, this is hardly the adventurous life they had left a warm bed and welcoming home behind for.

The Cold Brook...

With only an hour until dusk, the group knowing that there are no villages in the area set about founding a camp. As they need to refill their waterbags they follow the slope of the land, hoping to find a stream or pool at the bottom of the valley they are currently passing through. As dusk finally falls the group finds themselves before a pristine brook. Its water seems clean, cold and very pure. Also nearby are a series of rocks, some of which are carved and worked. In the dying light the party can only guess that they are near a pre-Scourge ruin.

A Desperate Cry For Help...

As the group finishes eating and a watch is set the peaceful silence of the valley night is broken. A cry can be heard. Running to the source of the cries, amidst the nearby stone ruins Jarma and his companions come across a terrible sight.

A Griffin is feasting, attacking a crippled woman. With only one more hit the woman stops screaming, she is dead. The griffin sets about its meal.

The Griffin's Feast...

The woman is dead before Jarma even has time to think. He has in his past seen sheep slaughtered, but never anything like this. In front of him lies a gory mess, the big griffin tearing into the torso of its catch, Jarma notices her arms were tied.

Jarma is hiding amongst the ruins watching the terrible display with perverse fascination, and fear. Boulek taps him on the shoulder and points above. The sky above darkens, stars are blocked out as something big slowly descends above the griffin. Within in seconds the sky ship has been expertly maneuvered without a sound over the beast and nets are being flung to ensnare the creature. The griffin abandons its meal and tries to take to the air, an amber glowing light surrounds the creature and it staggers then stumbles, falling with a bone



breaking crash on some rocks. The griffin lies still, blood dripping from its great beak. Above voices can be heard, human and dwarven voices. The crew of the skyship are making for land, sliding down ropes and gathering about the beast with pole arms at hand.

A Ship From the Skies...

Within minutes the humans are surrounding the area and it is but a matter of time before Jarma, Boulek and the others are discovered. A sailor stumbles across them, calling to a superior. With his pole arm and the ruins to his advantage, he is blocking their only exit. A robed man levitates down from the sky ship and asks for explanation for his summoning.

The robed man is a wizard, and with a flairful fluttering of his long purple velvet sleeves, he finally speaks directly to Jarma and friends. He tells them they are prisoners, and that there is no possible escape. They are now the property of the Denairastas family, rulers of Iopos (Earthdawn page 327). He tells them to come out from their hiding spot and get ready to board the sky ship, their new but temporary home.

Raiders Nearby...

Jarma and his fellows hesitate, they did not leave home to enter slavery, but they seem to have little choice. As the wizard's patience starts to fail, the griffin breaks free of its magical immobilisation, raking one of its tormentors with its bloodied claws. The dwarf lets out a blood curdling scream as he dies in a growing pool of his own fluids, within seconds he is still.

The distraction is reinforced at the same moment by what can only be a magical assault on the skyship. Fireball after

fireball slam into the keel of the skyship. All eyes turn skyward, where not too far distant another skyship is maneuvering to attack the stationary ship from Iopos. The wizard ignores Jarma and his friends, more important matters are at hand. Calling for his men to restrain the griffin and get it aboard he casts his own spells. The fires gripping the keel of his ship sputter and die out, fine flakes of ice crystal fall to ground below and again, after a quick casting the griffin is paralysed.

The griffin is lifted to the deck of the ship with magic, the wizard is nowhere to be seen but can be heard about needing the griffin for its 'potential'. Jarma and Boulek start to fade into the night, their companions quickly catching on and following.

Meanwhile the other skyship has moved in closer and is again letting loose with a magical barrage. Two missiles slam into the hull, one goes straight through the vessel. The cracking of timber drowns out all sound briefly, then as Jarma and friends finally edge out of line-of-sight they round a corner to be confronted by trolls.

The trolls hurry past them, too intent on their own business to notice the four silhouettes amongst the flashes of fire and the sounds of battle. It is soon apparent that the trolls are from the rival skyship, and they are hurrying to enact some mundane trickery on the Denairastas' vessel.

Boulek turns to Jarma and sighs. The others fidget, Jarma looks at them and says "You wanted adventure."

They can only look back at him silently.

Meanwhile a human is helping the trolls light flaming arrows that they are peppering the underside of the wizard's skyship with from beneath. By the time the wizard discovers the flames it is too late.

Jarma's Choice...

Amidst the ruins Jarma looks skyward, he always had wanted to fly. Now maybe, if he could prove himself he would get his chance. Either that, slavery or death. Forgetting about his warm bed back in Tarson once and for all, he turned around...

The Unfolding Legend Begins...

From this starting point there are many possibilities. Jarma (or should you turn this into an introductory scenario, your players) could try and join the Crystal Raiders that are attacking the Wizard's sky ship. Hoping of course to join the raider's crew, this has its dangers of having to survive the immediate battle and befriend the raiders. It is also possible that the battle maybe lost, if he survives he is probably going to be looking at a new career in slavery under the ownership of the Denairastas family.

Competition

FASA's new fantasy RPG was reviewed last issue and is available now. To help launch this great new game FASA has supplied us with three copies to give away for the readers who can answer this question;

"What is the name, race and discipline of the character used as an example in the 'Creating a Character' section of the rule book?"

Get your answers into us by the end of October and you may win one of three specially bound, numbered and signed collector's editions of **Earthdawn**.

Plotting Doom

An Essay on Creating a Fantasy Campaign For New & Experienced Referees By Colin Taber

Before I dive into the body of this article I want to make it clear what it is about: That is, how best to get enjoyment out of running a campaign if you are going to be refereeing it. This essay is aimed at inexperienced referees who are looking for some answers and suggestions.

SATISFACTION

Role playing is about fun. This comes from planning and co-operation. If you want to be a good referee you have to be prepared to put in time and effort. Only with such commitment will the end result bring satisfaction.

To this end, the harmony of your group which is also integral to a successful campaign is not just your responsibility, it is a collective responsibility. I suggest you tell the group this, if ever a problem arises.

In the Beginning...

The basics of creating a good campaign are simple - just time consuming. Think about what you, the referee, want to run. Once you've decided, consider it again and this time carefully take into account your players feelings, then make a final decision.

For example, my regular group is looking to start a fantasy campaign. I know I don't want to use my own campaign world as I don't have the time to detail it, so I consider the following options; *Forgotten Realms*, *Dark Sun*, the *Warhammer World*, *Earthdawn's Barsaive* or *Realms's Unae*. I know I also don't have time to catch up on a thousand and one supplements (let alone the cash) so my choice is narrowed to *Earthdawn* and *Unae*. *Earthdawn* is new and quite interesting so I decide its time to take the plunge and start to create a legend.

I then consider; I'll like it... but there's perhaps too much magic for my players taste. I decided to use *Unae*, with either of the *AD&D* or *WFRP* systems.

What's Important

From the above section you will have deduced that I believe the number one factor in a good campaign is it being something the referee *wants* to do. I have previously been in the situation where I was running something solely for the players. I hated it, consequently the players didn't really enjoy it and over all I could say nothing less than it

was a waste of six months. If you value anything I've left out of the above 'formula' add your own variables. But, what is the top priority in this area is that the referee has to come first. Its like sitting for an exam, if you don't want to pass you won't.

Rules? What Rules?

While you are building from the ground up how to best develop a good campaign decide once and for all (the campaign duration at least) what rules you are using. In a game like *AD&D* with its source books for races and classes you should make a ruling on these accessories before you start your new plot (contradictions during the campaign in rules or story are easily the biggest evil).

Also decide whose job it is to know the rules, in my games it is the players (this is why in the above example I leave it to the players to choose what rules they want to use). What this entails to me as a referee is that I have a basic understanding of the rules, which I use, improvising the rest. It is the players job to look up things that *they* get concerned about, not mine. My players know I have neither the time nor interest in the mechanics to bother with them. In all *RPG's* the rules are just guidelines, consequently don't let players arrogantly quote them in your face.

Above all, remember who is boss.

Tailoring to Taste

Building on the above point, you have to tailor your game to taste. If your players are a pack of rules lawyers and they expect you to know it all (and you don't mind) go in that direction. If they are fairly open about it all, or in the other extreme don't know the first thing about the rules do what you have to (someone has to know how combat works).

The simple way to tailor a campaign is to ask players what they actually want, don't look for a situation where one player is arguing with the other over how important the rules are, just look for suggestions:

- *Are we going to use spell components?*
- *Do we believe in alignment languages?*
- *Does any of the party know anything about the Chaos powers?*
- *Are players allowed to consult the rules during combat (eg. peeking at stats).*
- *Are we using encumbrance?*

It is important that people know where they stand in regard to these things now, not three months down the line. Some groups I have spoken to have gone as far as to have a written constitution. While this is perhaps overkill (but again to taste) I would simply suggest it should be discussed before things start to roll.

Once this is done you will know the following;

- *What setting you are going to use*
- *What system you are going to use.*
- *What fits the players styles*
- *What the players actually want*
- *What the players expect (as per your discussion with them regarding rules).*

At this point you are ready to start, you just need to consider your storyline.

THE ART OF STORYTELLING

Refereeing all comes down to one needed ability, this ability is to create and tell a story well. In telling it, the story should be ensnaring, and it should work as a role playing plot line (ie one in which players can get involved). To create this you need to be aware of the basic elements.

The Elements

First you must decide on the fundamentals of what the campaign is. Is it a wilderness, city or a dungeon adventure, perhaps it is a combination. How strongly is magic going to feature? Will the gods themselves become involved? Is it an epic campaign of world shattering importance? Is one player in particular going to be a focus, and if so is she going to turn up regularly enough and be able to comprehend the importance of her character? These are all important points that must be considered and answered now, not later.

Plots

Some of the most basic ingredients of a good role playing-friendly plot are very easy to create, remember these and you're half way there: A plot has to move, the clock must be ticking. It has to involve the players, ideally with them wanting to be involved and not getting forced into it. The plot should be flexible and original (I've seen people rip off movies that were on TV two nights prior to the gaming session).

To effectively build a good plot ideally start small and try to keep it low key. Epic save-the-world plots wear very thin and are ultimately not as rewarding as plots that involve the players' corner of the world instead of the world as a whole. Such epic plots are good occasionally, but they must be very well prepared and executed, otherwise you run the risk of poisoning such avenues for your group.

An important point here is (even though this is fantasy) the players can only save the world so many times. After sixteen times they are going to start treating the whole thing a bit lightly, you are better off steering the players into saving themselves, their families or possessions.

Themes

A good base for a plot is a theme, whether the players ever pick up on it is irrelevant, it will at least give you a direction and simple point of reference (for example see the Tessa mini campaign published in issue 10 and 11 - the theme of which was renewal). To decide on a theme gives you, as a referee a chance to put your own thoughts across (quietly, but effectively).

Characters

The players are important to any campaign, but what is equally vital is NPC's. You as the referee must create believable and useful NPC's that can interact, help or hinder the players. Such NPC's should never be treated as a simple collection of statistics. You should use your NPC's as a method of leading by example, show the players how you expect them to game. Also try and avoid using NPC's to lead players by the hand, while sometimes necessary it eventually will mean the players will stop thinking, whenever they are in a tight spot they will just look for the 'guide' you've supplied.

A well played NPC should be clear in your mind as to what she can and can't do. She should also have her own goals and ambitions, ideally a set which doesn't mix too neatly with the players (after all she is an NPC, not a party member). The duration of NPC's membership of a party should be kept fairly short, but make it plain when appropriate the party can always try and find old NPC's again. They are contacts, often allies and friends that players can and should visit for information, help and even in a good campaign, just company.

Sub-Plots

Another simple method of creating a good campaign, one with depth is to have several plots. Have one major plot line, but weave from this several minor lines. They may be completely unrelated to the major plot, just coincidentally unwinding in the same area at the same time. Such layered plots give a campaign depth and when done well an element of confused reality that will keep a party moving. A good campaign is a busy campaign.

The Pace Maker

Following on from the above, a very important part of refereeing is setting and maintaining the pace of a campaign. When starting out always try to keep it moving at a reasonably fast speed, but never leave the players behind (well, not too far!). When you have got the hang of controlling the pace (a great method is rumour dropping and starting minor plots) you can then start to vary it. You will be able to make a climax of a campaign or the calm before the storm seem *magical* with careful manipulation of the pace. For example before something dramatic gradually slow the pace, then as that section's climax nears increase the speed whipping the players into a frenzy. By supplying that contrast you are highlighting the importance or drama of the 'main event'.

...And Backfiring Reality

One thing I did discover over the years is reality doesn't work in gaming. By this I will simply provide an example of what happened to me to illustrate what I mean.

I had a sci-fi campaign running for the Rebellion RPG and was getting pretty sick of my cocky players who thought they were ever so good. So I gave the merc's a job they would never be able to complete in an effort to bring them back down to earth. The job itself is irrelevant, the simple fact is they spent a couple of sessions trying to accomplish it and they thought they were going okay, not great, but okay. They weren't, I dropped hints, and then I got to

drop my bombshell. They got sacked, their contract was terminated. They were told to leave the planet.

Now the realities of life are that seven mercs can't do what they were trying to do, but this is gaming. What I had done was taken away the 'escapism' I had shot them down in flames. Their beloved characters were worse than dead, they were failures, and an entire planet knew it, worse still, so did I. The looks on these guys faces was of disbelief, and rightly so. When you referee, many of you, like me do like a 'realistic' game, but never make it 'real'. A game should be challenging, not unchallengeable.

Weaving Them Together

The best way to put all these things together is just to have everything written down and organised. I always note down plot lines in a point form, also marking in sub plots. Keep NPC's on separate sheets of paper and in a brief form. Plan the order and how you are going to reveal aspects of the campaign to the players. Its all in the telling.

ASPIRING TO PERFECTION

You will know when you are doing well. Hopefully some of you will also enjoy the benefits of players who aren't afraid to tell you how you did at the end of each session. If you don't you will have to assess yourself when you sit back in your chair and evaluate your own performance.

You are your best critic.

Did you enjoy it?

Issue 13 Feedback Form

In an effort to always deliver the best we invite you to fill in this issue's feedback form and return it with your comments. Please feel free to attach a letter.

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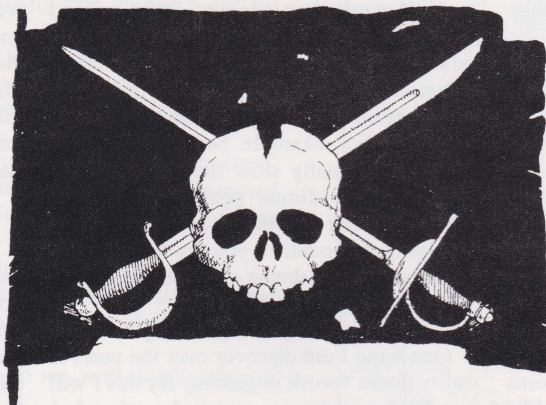
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Swashbuckle your way into a world of a time gone past of adventure, revenge and treachery. Sail the high seas of the Spanish Main, where gold doubloons flow out of the Spanish colonies like water and living is nothing more than getting drunk. Battle with Blackbeard as you compete for a straggler of the Spanish Treasure Fleet or deceive "Black Bart" Roberts into a staged trap of English Pirate-Hunters. Navigate your sloop through the blue waters and dreaded reefs of the Caribbean. Hack your way into the steamy jungles of the Yucatan in search for buried treasure to find yourself and your crew diseased beyond cure. Prowl the Red Sea in search of a fat Arab Cargoman or be blown out of the sea by an unexpected encounter with Barbary Corsairs. Visit and drink yourself merry with the buccaneers at Port Royale while your crew steals three of their vessels. Plan a sacking of Maracaibo with the pirate brotherhoods in Tortuga and skewer one of the pigs with your rapier as he treacherously calls you a traitor. Stage the capture of a great Morghul treasure fleet with the rogues in Madagascar while your pirate base on the other side of the island is being attacked by Portuguese Pirate-Hunters. Diplomacise with the English Governor of Bermuda for a Letter of Marque and at the same time gain information about his fortifications. Send spies to assassinate the psychopath Spanish Governor of Havana as he turns over a loyal companion to the Inquisition. Smuggle your way through customs and sell ill-gotten booty into the marketplace at Santiago. Feel your frigate shiver under your feet as it fires a full broadside and hear it smash into a pirate sloop turning it into matchwood. Invest your money into pearl diving and watch your profits and empire increase. Administrate the demands of your colony and defend it from a naval attack of a Spanish Armada. Torture your friend's character on the main deck to the delights of your piratical crew or get marooned on a small island in the Comoro Islands because you neglected to supply your crew with rum. The list just does not end!!! SWASHBUCKLER is an open-ended game in which the limit of action is your own imagination.

Features include:

- * Explore over 10000 locations covering the West Indies, the Spanish Main, Africa, Arabia and India and visit over 100 known ports and colonies.
- * Five character types to choose from ranging from pirate to governor.
- * Six races to choose from ranging from Spanish to Native Indian.
- * Increase in the 20 skills as you gain experience.
- * Hundreds of players and thousands of NPCs to diplomacise with.
- * 80 types of actions to perform and free-form orders.
- * Send turns in whenever you like - there is no deadline.
- * Play up to two positions in the game.
- * Over 6 cannon types and 11 ship types.
- * Over 50 installations you can build, eg., taverns, brothels, silver mines, sugarcain etc.
- * Develop and design your own ships, cannon, weapons, installations etc etc etc.
- * Maps and buried items.
- * Design and fly your own flags.
- * Form brotherhoods with other players.
- * Historical pirates, buccaneers, pirate-hunters and governors as NPCs.
- * Fortnightly News and Rumour sheets contributed by the players.
- * Many other details which we cannot fit on the page. This game is endless!!

Objectives of the game:

The major objective of the game is to get Fame and Fortune. Depending on the career type you have chosen, the importance varies for Fame and Fortune. You can do this any way you like, there are no restrictions.

Startup and cost:

Upon start up you receive a rules book, an order book, two b/w maps, character generation sheets, and the latest New and Rumour sheet. The cost for the startup package is \$10 this includes character generation. Every turn that you send in to get processed by the GM will cost \$8. No stamp or duty fees included. Processed turns are either laser or 24 pin printed and range from 5 to more than 30 pages long. If players send in more than \$50 dollars a free turn will be given.

Please fill out this coupon if you are interested to play SWASHBUCKLER. Send cheque and your details below to PASPA GAMES, PO BOX 4342, University of Melbourne, Parkville, VIC 3052.

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MONSTER GALLERY

Claw Warrior

By Richard Hampshire

Climate/Terrain: Desert plains, open areas.
Frequency: Occasional (but in great numbers when found)
Organisation: Pack/tribe (see below) **Diet:** Carnivorous
Intelligence: Anamistic (see below)
Alignment: Neutral **Treasure:** Nil
No. Appearing: 10 to 50
AC: 7 **Movement:** 10" **HD:** 3
Damage/Attack: 1d10/1d10 (2 claws)
Special Attacks: Razor sharp claws +4 versus non-magical armours
Special Defences: Immune to charm, sleep and hold spells
MR: Standard **Size:** M **Morale:** Steady (11-12) **XP:** 450

The origins of the claw warrior are unknown. From first glance they appear to be a form of undead, but they are not. They live in packs, and follow a leader who may possess some form of intelligence.

They travel from place to place searching for food; they are partial to anything and everything including adventurers. Claw warriors can burrow quickly and their sharp hearing will warn them of approaching adventurers. They will burrow into soft sand and attack when their victims pass above, gaining automatic surprise. They will retreat when several of their number are slain, or if magic is used as they fear it greatly.

The ungainly and undernourished appearance of claw warriors make them seem easy opponents, but their claws are razor sharp and strong enough to easily pierce armour. They wear no armour themselves, nor use any weapons, nor carry any possessions. They kill to eat, and are often hungry.

The Gargoyle

By Colin Taber

The gargoyle was omitted from the WFRP rule book, which is surprising when its gothic origins are considered. To rectify this, and as the gargoyle features prominently in future installments of *Realms*'s Unae material I present this game information for WFRP.

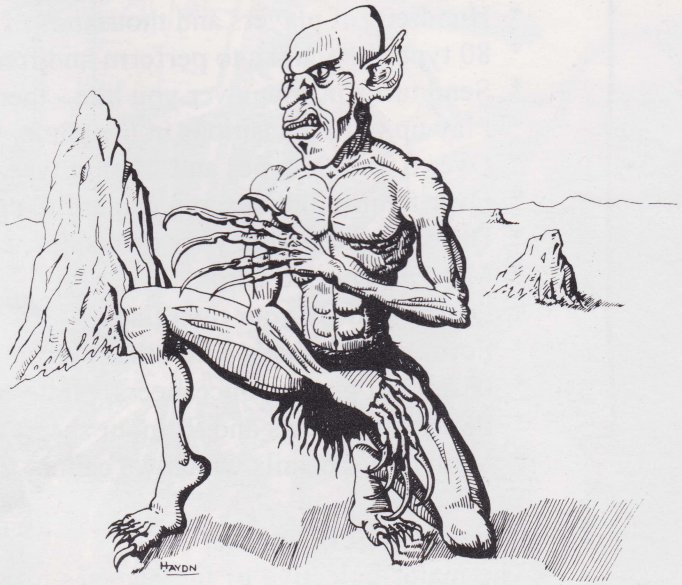
Gargoyles live in nests, occasionally isolated but usually very crowded and often found in ruins. Such an example are the Hives of Kalraith. These communities amount to nothing less than cities, and while individually gargoyles display only minimal intelligence they have a very good understanding of their power as a group.

Gargoyles attack in swarms. The average creature is tough and dangerous, but not unbeatable. It is when they attack in waves with perhaps scores or hundreds of fellows that they become nearly invincible. The chance of having a second attack to deliver a killing blow on a particular gargoyle are not worth considering when they are in such wave formations. Attacking with raking claws, a bite and their fellows, they are truly to be feared. Whether in the Reiklands of the Warhammer world or the northern plains of Kalraith or Fletland in Unae.

Basic Profile

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	33	33	4	4	6	20

A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	33	21	24	29	29	14



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Road To Hell

"Heads up, Lars. Here they come."

The one called Lars looked up, quickly finding the object of his companion's attention. The sight drew a mirthless chuckle. "Green lookin' bunch, Tank." Both watched in silence as twenty four grey clad figures stumbled across the shattered road towards them. Their uniforms were clean, undamaged, their weapons shiny. They looked green and their faces confirmed it. They were all plainly terrified.

Except one. Tank saw him first, striding through the clumsy gaggle Lars' gaze fell on him, the sight drawing a pained groan.

"Mechwarrior," he sighed.

"Yep. Here we go again." Both had seen the orange patch, with a Crusader silhouette, on the man's breast pocket. On a Mechwarrior, the patch

indicated membership of a proud and exclusive club, the self-styled knights of the thirtieth century. On an infantryman, it usually marked a bitter, resentful man, brought down from his lofty throne by forces beyond his control. The Mechwarrior spotted them and strode to the edge of their improvised gun pit. They looked up at him.

"Sergeants Tank Nezic and Lars Neiman? I am Mechwarrior-Lieutenant Raiff Stuart," he announced stiffly. "You will stand when I address you."

"Yes, sir," the pair replied in unison as they grudgingly stood.

"Sergeants, take these men to their defensive positions, then report to me for orders." He paused, scanned the surrounding buildings, selecting a relatively undamaged street level shop.

"I will set up my headquarters in there. I expect you there in twenty minutes." Without another word, he wheeled and marched away.

Lars sighed and turned to face the gaggle of raw recruits.

"Alright, maggots. Gather 'round and listen up." They quickly complied.

"We got any experience here?"

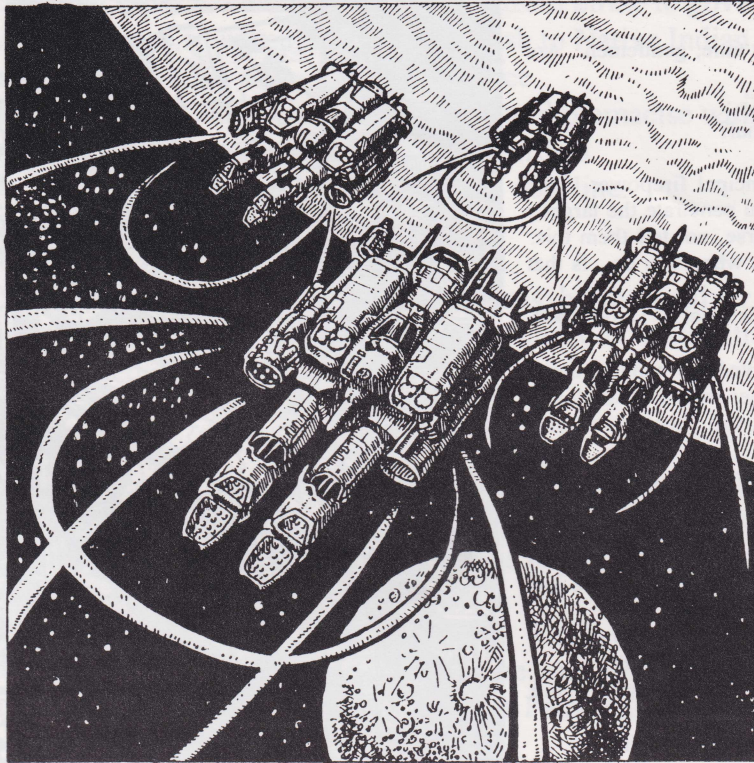
Two men stepped forward. One, short and slightly paunchy, spoke up. "Corporal Gearen, Sergeant. Two years sentry duty at the Newhaven Armoury."

Tank rolled his eyes. "Great, a nine to fiver. And you?" he asked the other, quieter man.

"Name's Hart. Three years with Ransom's Regulars, then two with Draken's Light."

Tank blinked in surprise. The Regulars were a no-consequence merc rabble, but Draken's Light were a professional combined arms raiding team, able to hire the best.

"Glad to have you on board, Hart. I'm making you squad leader.



By
Mike Dunn

You, too Gearen." Tank glanced at Lars, who nodded.

"Follow me, Gearen," said Lars. "And don't think you're anything special, just 'cause you're a squad leader. Far as I'm concerned you're Raxx fodder until proven otherwise. Bring half of your buddies." With that, Lars clumped moodily into the closest building through a breach in the wall. Several of those remaining watched him go. Tank addressed them.

"Alright. You lot are now two squad. Corporal Hart is your squad leader. Do as he says and you might live a bit longer."

He shoved his hands into his pockets.

"Okay. Here are the facts. I don't want to die here, I don't give a damn about this war, and if you're smart neither will you. So, when a 'mech comes down that road, you do like I do and make like rocks. You hear?"

Murmurs of assent answered him.

He grimaced. "YOU HEAR," he bellowed.

"YES, Sergeant!" they chorused loudly.

"Better. Now follow me." Scooping up his rifle he headed for the building across the street.

It took half an hour to allocate them positions. He answered their nervous questions and did his best to instil some confidence in them, but when he and Hart descended the stairs his own confidence was severely shaken.

"Watch 'em close, Hart," he said, "they need a firm hand."

"Yeah." Hart produced a thin pack of the local cigarettes, offered one to Tank. Lighting both, he said;

"That Looey is bad news. He wants a 'mech. My guess is he'll want us to kick the can."

Tank raised his eyebrows. "Ambush a 'mech? He'll be disappointed. We don't get many down here. They usually avoid these streets. Too many places to hide a man."

Hart nodded. "I know, but they just moved the ammo dump." He paused, drew deeply on his cigarette, then pointed down the road. "S'about two kays down there."

Tank stared wordlessly at his companion, before looking in the direction he pointed. "Great. Just when I was getting comfy." He spat angrily on the footpath.

"Damn fool officers. Okay, Hart. get up there and keep a sharp eye on those kids. I gotta go see his highness."

Hart nodded, dropping his smoke and grinding it out beneath a well-worn boot. With a quick glance up the road he turned and disappeared into the darkness of the building.

As Tank strode into the street, Lars emerged from the building opposite. The two met in the middle.

"How bad are they?" asked Tank.

"Bad. Lieutenant's been filling their heads with death-or-glory stuff. They want a 'mech to shoot at."

Tank nodded. "Mine too. I told Hart to stomp on them if they get too keen. Come on, let's go face the music." They made their way to the shop. As they stepped through the splintered door frame, Stuart looked up from a map.

"I'll thank you to knock next time, gentlemen. Are the troops in position?"

Tank spoke. "Yes, sir. But..."

"Is your heavy laser operational?"

"Yes, sir, but it isn't..."

"Excellent. You are my principal firepower. The platoon is to draw fire while you penetrate the target's head armour. You will, of course, not tell them this. Simply tell them they are to fire when you do. Is that understood?"

They exchanged glances of disbelief. "Understood, sir."

"Good. Dismissed." He waved his hand at them, turning back to his map. Neither man said anything, both silently exiting the room, too shocked to raise objections.

Outside, Tank spoke quietly. "See the crest on his cap. He's Steiner badge."

Lars furrowed his brow. "Royalty? That doesn't make sense. He wouldn't get himself posted here just to get a 'mech. Nobody's that desperate."

"No? Remember that guy last year, tried to climb a Rifleman's leg with a pistol between his teeth."

Lars grinned. "Yeah. They're probably still trying to hose him off the armour."

"How about Captain Hamm. Remember him?"

"Old Piggy? Yeah, wasn't he the one who made us string a cable between two lamp posts to trip a 'mech up?"

"That's him. Funniest thing I ever saw, that Battlemaster dragging the cable down the road, Old Piggy hanging on and screaming 'Grab hold, grab hold!'"

Lars laughed. "Yeah, that was something." He sobered quickly, looked back at the shop front. "Think this guy's that crazy."

Tank nodded. "I don't think its going to be very funny this time." Both knew what that meant. Without another word, they turned to go back to their position.

Across the street, Corporal Hart watched the two sergeants carry the laser piece by piece up to a fifth floor window. It took little imagination to realise they were setting up for an ambush. He glanced down the road, eyes narrowing as he saw Stuart emerge from the battered shop front.

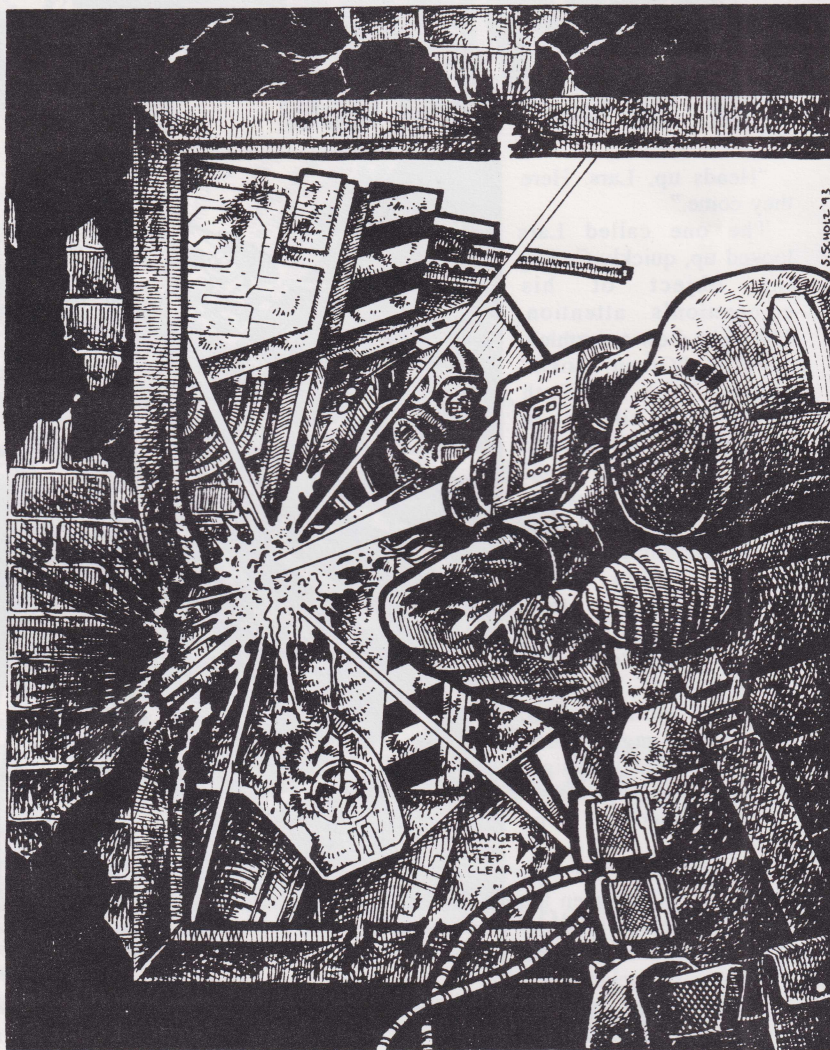
His fingers tightened instinctively on his rifle.

* * *

Stuart awoke suddenly, looking about in bewilderment. It took a few seconds for his sleep-fogged mind to refocus. He glanced at his watch; 0145 hours. He was dimly aware of a strange sound outside, and stumbled blearily into the street to see. Bright light suddenly assailed his eyes.

He cried out throwing himself behind a crushed ground car. Less than a kilometre away, a dark mass erupted from behind a building, climbing on two spears of white fire, an intense search-beam sweeping the darkness. It landed atop the old prison building, jet ports glowing cherry red. It paused for a few seconds, then jumped down, disappearing into the broken valleys of the streets.

Stuart's breath came short. He closed his eyes and sent a



prayer to the gods he did not believe in. He would have that 'mech if it cost the life of every man in the platoon.

Tank snapped instantly awake. Lars, on guard duty, already was crouched behind the laser, hands gently cradling the grips.

Tank squatted beside him. "Anything?"

"Phoenix Hawk," growled Lars.

"I hate those bastards. Too many lasers."

"Maybe it won't come this way," said Lars knowing full well theirs was the only street in the sector wide enough for a 'mech.

"Right," said Lars. "And maybe Kerensky will drop by and take us away from all this."

Seconds later the rhythmic thunder of forty five tons of walking metal shook the floor. Tank gritted his teeth.

Lars spoke calmly. "Relax bud. We don't have to worry." Despite his words Lars' voice was tight with emotion. "The boss said we initiate. Nobody will fire unless we do. We don't."

Tank nodded. "Yeah. Yeah, maybe he'll just walk right by."

He saw Lars' grip on the laser grips tighten. "I sure hope so," he whispered, "because here he comes!"

Tank looked outside. Ten metres tall, the 'mech's shadowy bulk filled the street. It strode evenly toward them on blocky, angular legs, sweeping the aim of its immense laser left to right. The road cracked with every step.

Tank scooped up a rifle and slapped in a magazine, clutching the weapon in sweaty palms. Lars stared fixedly through the heavy laser's sights, lips moving in a silent prayer.

Oblivious, the 'mech drew closer. It was already at three

hundred metres, well within range of its heavy laser. Two hundred metres. Flashes of light from another battle streets away lit the sky, silhouetting the 'mech. One hundred metres. Tank pressed himself against the inside wall.

Lars crouched unmoving, staring.

"Don't anybody fire. Don't anybody dare fire," whispered Tank.

It drew level. The huge head seemed to fill the window. Tank held his breath. It kept moving. He crawled quickly to the window, peered cautiously at its retreating back. Relief flooded through him. His breath escaped in a long sigh. Death had walked near, cast its shadow upon them, and had passed by.

He looked at Lars whose relief was obvious as his own. The pair began laughing quietly, almost ashamedly.

In the street below, Stuart watched in outrage as the Phoenix Hawk strode unscathed past the ambush point. It had been mere metres from the heavy weapons team. He would never get another chance like this again. Desperation welled deep within him. It had taken all his waning influence to get a platoon of heavy infantry, and the last of his cash to get him a posting that offered a chance at a 'mech.

Reason left him. He raised his laser rifle to his shoulder, stepping clear of the protection of the shadows.

Screaming insults at an uncaring sky, he fired.

Tank went cold at the sound of the laser bolt. His shock was mirrored in Lars' face. As one, they sprang to the window and looked outside. What they saw was so absurd that Lars, despite himself, laughed in disbelief.

In the street a solitary figure confronted the 'mech. Brandishing a rifle, he stooped to pick up a chunk of debris which he hurled at the now stationary Phoenix Hawk. Over the deep thrum of the 'mech's power plant they could hear the figure shrieking incoherently. The 'mech seemed transfixed as if uncertain how to deal with a lone, defiant and obviously brain-dead human.

"That's our boss, isn't it?" said Lars.

"Yep," replied Tank. "Won't be for much longer, though."

"Wish that 'mech jockey would get it over with," said Lars nervously. "If he waits much longer, one of our boys might..."

He was cut off by a single shouted word from the floor below. "Fire!" Lars spun wildly on Tank who was already on his feet and running for the stairs. Tank glanced back as he exited. "Gearen," he spat, then leapt down the stairs.

The crack of rifles sounded as first squad obeyed the command.

Flashes lit the monster's rear armour as the explosive rounds hit home. The 'mech turned and raised its arms. Heat and sound ripped at Lars' senses as the Phoenix Hawk's full battery of lasers smashed into the lower floors.

Incredibly, the rifle fire did not stop. Though diminished, the fusillade of gnat bites continued to gnaw at the monolithic machine's armour. It returned fire with light lasers while its heat sinks did their work.

From across the street, two squad opened up. Keeping low, Lars moved to the window and swung the laser into firing position. The 'mech had obviously cooled further and was busily reducing the building to slag with its medium lasers.

"I gotta get a new job," the sergeant grumbled, as he pressed the trigger pad. Two inch bolts erupted from the weapon. Molten armour splashed from the impacts, leaving deep black trenches.

Lars grimly held the sight on target as the 'mech lurched suddenly. Turning, the Hawk took a volley of laser fire full across the front of the cockpit. In obvious panic, the pilot raised his weapons and fired another broadside. The heavy laser missed, streaking across the sky. The lighter bolts peppered harmlessly around Lars' window.

Nearing shutdown temperatures, the pilot stopped firing the coolant-hungry lasers. Lars was certain the monster would run before the incessant rifle fire began to crack through to the delicate internals. He silently exhorted the pilot to lose heart.

to run to fight another day.

He didn't.

Too hot to fire, the 'mech lurched at the building, fists raised as crude battering rams. Inexperience showed as it stumbled clumsily into the wall, driving its arms elbow-deep into the fourth floor. The building shook violently, throwing Lars to the bucking floor. Ignoring the sharp pain in his right knee, he scrambled back behind his weapon. Three metres away, the Phoenix Hawk's head was a daunting sight. Blinking away the plaster dust, Lars sighted and fired.

His efforts were paying off. Concentrating on damaged areas, his fire began to tunnel through the head armour. The pilot was becoming scared, trying desperately to extricate himself from the building. Screams reached Lars, along with a further reduction in the volume of rifle fire. His platoon was dying. Again. He silently prayed for Tank.

The 'mech pulled free. Lars ceased fire, hoping to hide in the darkness. Across the street, winks of light marked the fire of his own squad. The 'mech staggered about, stupidly ignoring the greater threat of the heavy laser to deal with the rifle squad. Its machine guns stuttered. The muzzle flashes from one window ceased.

Lars gritted his teeth, but held his fire, letting the barrel cool.

The Phoenix Hawk raised its arms. Lars thought it was going to try another clumsy charging attack, but instead, despite its overloaded cooling system, it fired its lasers. The intense white beams sliced into the building opposite, cutting steel, vapourising stone, killing men. Lars heard the sharp popping of expanding armour as the intense heat permeated the machine's structure. Slowed almost to a stop by the heat buildup, the 'mech staggered towards the wounded office block, from which only a few of Lars' men still fired.

Enraged, he opened up, squinting through the sights with hate-filled eyes. Chunks of armour fell away as he clawed at it with his overheating laser. A warning buzzer sounded, telling him his own coolant was exhausted. He impatiently slapped the override and kept firing.

The beast was slowly turning, its myomers almost melting in the furnace of its own waste heat. Lars felt his handgrips becoming hot, but kept firing, ripping at the head as it gradually rotated to face him. An arm, holding an enormous laser, slowly raised to point at him.

"Die, damn you!" he screamed.

He mashed his thumb harder against the trigger pad, howling in frustration. There was a dull red flash from the 'mech's head. An instant later, his own weapon gave a sharp crack and began spewing smoke. He leapt back in a futile attempt to avoid the volley that would surely kill him.

It never came.

He raised his head, confused by the silence. Only the distant sound of other battles broke the stillness. He crawled to the window and peered outside. The Phoenix Hawk stood unmoving. Its blackened head smoked slightly. Parts of it glowed in the darkness. As he watched, it swayed slightly, like a drunk in a breeze, then rocked back the other way. And began to fall. It seemed to take forever.

Falling backwards, its right arm struck the much-tortured roadway first. The thunderous crash made Lars instinctively duck. When he looked again, the monster was still.

He relaxed, sagging forward onto the window sill, held breath escaping with an exhausted groan. His thoughts turned to his comrades, and he made his way to the stairs to seek out Tank.

He found him, crouched beside an unruly pile of rubble on the ground floor. A leg protruded from the pile.

"Any survivors?" asked Lars quietly.

Tank nodded without looking up. "Two kids in the next room. One's okay, but his buddy will never see again."

"That's it, two of them?"

He nodded, eyes closed, then looked up.

"How's your squad? They okay?"

"Hart should be taking care of them."

A voice, high and cracked, sounded outside. Tank and Lars exchanged glances, then moved to the hole to look outside. The two sergeants saw no movement until a shout echoed from the shadows of the opposite sidewalk. From the darkness, a figure ran wildly towards the feet of the battletech. A rifle clutched in one hand, a bulky object trailing loose cables in the other.

Tank swore viciously. "That's Stuart! The vulture's got his neurohelmet!"

Stuart clambered awkwardly onto the 'mech's body, quickly reaching the head and scrambling over the scarred face to the hatch. Carefully laying down his helmet, he knelt and began tugging at the emergency release.

He looked about, his gaze settling on the two men. "You two!" he shouted. "Come here and help me with this hatch!" he resumed tugging at the stubborn handle. Neither man moved. Stuart looked back at them.

"Sergeant Niemann! Come here immediately. I order you!"

Lars stood firm. "Sir, shouldn't you be calling for the medevac teams? We have wounded." His voice quavered with ill-concealed anger.

"Yes, yes, all in good time. Just help me with this hatch, and I'll deal with it straight away."

"Goddam you!" exploded Lars. "Your men are hurting, those that aren't dead, and all you can think about is your 'mech?" He strode into the street. "Get down off that thing, boy. I'm going to beat some sense into your thick royal skull."

Stuart moved surprisingly fast, grabbing his rifle and sighting on Lars. Lars stopped, breathing hard.

"One more step, Sergeant, and you'll be another casualty," shouted Stuart. "I've gambled too much to throw away an opportunity like this. Do you think this is the first time I've tried?" Stuart gave a harsh laugh. "Far from it, my friend."

He relaxed a little, letting the rifle's muzzle drop.

"You should be proud, Sergeant. All the other platoons were wiped out to a man when they tried an ambush." He adopted a condescending tone. "So now you pretend soldiers can go back to trying to survive this war which you cannot possibly benefit from." He lowered the rifle muzzle to the 'mech's surface.

"Myself, I'm off back to the palace. I'm sure the Royal Guard could use another Phoenix Hawk."

A rifle cracked.

Stuart seemed to leap suddenly into the air, arms and legs flailing wildly. He fell, crashing heavily to the ground. A dark stain began to spread around his head.

Lars stared in confusion. Hearing a movement across the street he looked up, scanning the darkness for the source of the shot. Buildings stared emptily back.

A hand on his shoulder made him start in surprise. He turned to see Tank beside him. He followed his gaze to a dark doorway. A figure emerged. The man limped, clearly dragging one leg. A rifle was slung over his shoulder.

The flame of a match dimmed to the glow of a cigarette.

"Hart," breathed Tank.

Hart made his way slowly to stand with the two men. They could see fresh cuts and burns across his already scarred face. A dark patch on his shirt clung wetly to the skin beneath. He passed the cigarette to Lars.

"You plan to take me in, Sarge?"

Seemingly lost in thought, Lars puffed absently on the cigarette before passing it to Tank.

"What for, Corporal?" he asked.

Hart nodded slightly. All three turned to gaze at the fallen machine.

"Now we just gotta get rid of the garbage," said Tank.

Hart smiled grimly, and looked at Stuart's still body. "Already done that, Sarge."

The three survivors turned as one and moved slowly, carefully out of the street. The shadows of the building swallowed them, leaving the dead battletech alone with its new owner. ■

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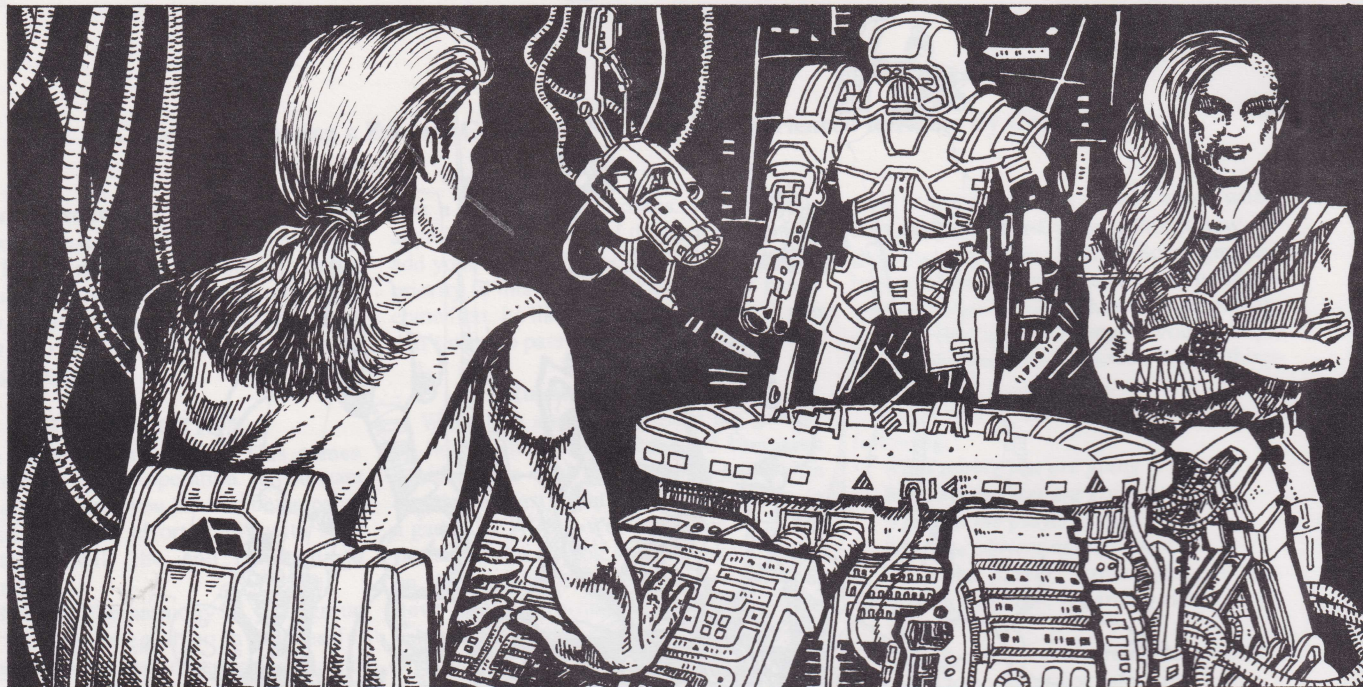
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S. SCHOLZ '93

In the towering glass and steel cities of Cyberpunk's dark future, movement along the urban canyons groundwise can be slow, congested and usually hazardous. Just getting cross town can take hours in the traffic, and you don't even want to risk it on foot.

To help alleviate this problem, the AV series of vehicles were developed. They give VTOL capability without the danger of rotor blades in the crowded built up zones. Trouble is, they're big, expensive and damned obvious. As a gamemaster, you really loathe giving these machines to the players, it makes them almost impervious to police harassment. And giving this stuff to NPC's, is worse because the players cannot tackle them without resorting to heavier and heavier firepower.

An AV of any model represents too much mobility, firepower and versatility.

A compromise is the Flight Pack series. Originally designed for Military applications, like many other things they have found ready acceptance in the shadowy world of corporate black operations and counter-espionage. These are much less cumbersome, do not overbalance the campaign, and players won't cry if they lose one.

All Flight Packs have certain factors in common. They are all relatively small, either being backpack units or small vehicles. They can only carry one or two men and their equipment, have a relatively low speed, and short operational flight times.

On the other hand, they are far more manoeuvrable than an AV in tight spaces, cost far less to own and operate, and can be dealt with more readily if fought against.

Currently available on the market, there are four typical models available. They are presented below with their various statistics and some brief notes on each.

JUMP PACK

SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	10kg (F)
EV	-1 to REF when worn
Fuel Charge	4kg (4 litres)
Max Lift	200kg
SP	1
SDP	10
Manoeuvre Mod	-1
Cost	2000 EB

Small backpack units designed to give the wearer power assisted leaps of up to 100m horizontally and 25m vertically. Each jump uses one charge of fuel in both propelling the wearer and providing stabilisation in flight. The landing also uses some of this fuel to soften the impact. A single jump may be extended by using extra charges of fuel. For example 2 charges may give a jump of 200m distance with a height of 50m. The Jump Pack can also be used to 'parachute' safely to the ground. It uses all it's fuel store in a controlled burst to decelerate the jumper to a landing similar to a parachute. To land safely when using the JP, the jumper must make a Pilot - Flight Pack skill check. A typical jump would be rated at least Average for Task Difficulty. Failure causes D6 wounds directly to the legs of the jumper.

SUSTAINED FLIGHT PACK

SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	20kg (Fuelled)
EV	-2 to REF when worn
Fuel Charge	10kg (10 litres, giving 20 mins flight)
Max Lift	200kg
SP	2
SDP	15
Manoeuvre Mod	+2
Cost	3500 EB

This is a large backpack unit with extending control arms and thrust verniers. It can carry the wearer for 20 minutes of flight or hovering. Its maximum speed is 60 kph, with a maximum range of 20 km. The safe Manoeuvre Speed is 50 kph, with an Acc/Dec per phase of 30 kph. The backpack comes with a quick release harness so that combat troops can quickly discard the unit once at their target. This takes one action to perform. Getting back into the harness takes two actions (one to pick the unit up, another to connect the harness). Activating the unit and lifting off takes another action.

HOVER PLATFORM

SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	150kg (fuelled)
EV	Nil (is not worn)
Fuel Charge	100kg (100 litres, 60 minutes flight)
Max Lift	250kg
SP	5
SDP	40
Manoeuvre Mod	+1
Cost	9000 EB

This is a small 1m diameter platform with a raised railing around it. The base is about 50cm deep, with various ducts and vents around its side and in the bottom. It is controlled by a joystick and control board mounted at waist height on the railing, with shifting of the rider also giving some manoeuvrability. The HoP has a top speed of 75 kph and a range of 75 km. The safe Manoeuvre Speed is 50 kph, with an Acc/Dec per phase of 30 kph. It is not as agile as the SFP, but is far more stable as a firing position. It can also be set to hover, leaving one or both hands free for other work (firing, repairs, observation etc.). The HoP can also be fitted with a small weapon system if desired, although this will count against the weight it can lift.

HOVER SLED

Weight	400 kg (fuelled)
EV	Nil (not worn)
Fuel	200 kg (200 litres, giving 60 mins flight)
Max Lift	500 kg
SP	10
SDP	50
Manoeuvre Mod	+1
Cost	20,000 EB

The Hover Sled is a two man version of the HoP. The pilot and copilot are seated in open seats on either side of a central fuselage. There are dual controls fitted on each side. Fuel, Avionics, thrusters and auxiliary equipment are carried in the fuselage. A 100 kg capacity hardpoint is fitted below the centre fuselage for weapons or equipment, although this will count against the Max Lift of the HoS. Top speed is 150 kph, with a range of 150 km. Safe Manoeuvre Speed is 50 kph, with an Acc/Dec per phase of 40 kph.

FLYING

Piloting either the JP or the SFP requires a new Piloting skill. This is Pilot-Flight Pack. It is similar to other Pilot skills and is used the same way. Skill chips can be bought at 350 EB per skill level. The HoP and HoS require Pilot-Vectored Thrust Aerodynes skill to be used. Any of the flight pack series can be fitted with Cyber Controls for an additional 40 % on top of the base price. This gives a +2 bonus to all control/piloting rolls made.

FUEL

Fuel for the Flight Pack series is identical to that used in all Aerodynes and costs the same. Note that any hit to a Flight Pack which actually damages it may cause a leak in the fuel tanks. The chance of a leak is 2% per point of damage caused in each hit. ■

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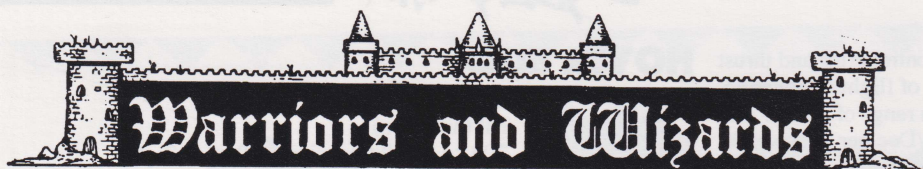
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Warriors and Wizards

Victory is just a block away!

feature article by Cameron Thomas

The story behind the game, is the same one that binds all the Roma Games together. A progression of games that have evolved from each other, mixed with a rich tapestry of Gods, the universe, conflict and you, the player. With *Warriors and Wizards*, the confines of the Halls of Champion arena have been broken, as the many battles within, overflowed their boundaries. The three Gods Masshiro (Master Order), Aka (Neutral) and Ankoku (Lord Chaos) now resided over an arena ten thousand blocks in size, with up to 50 players competing against each other. The contest for them would decide which God, ultimately, would control the Universe. To this end, they introduced many enhancements to the arena, and decided the winner would be the first player to reach the highest rank of King/Queen, and bring glory and victory to their chosen God.

THE CONTEST...

The contest arena is a 100 by 100 block map. Each player starts with a controlled area of 9x9 blocks. As one of up to 50 players, your object is to extend your control beyond your starting area, conflicting with other players, controlling as much territory as you can. To do this, you are given several options at the start of the game. You are required to choose which of the three Gods you will side with, as this will influence your play. You are given a choice of what units you can contest the map with, and finally you are allowed to arrange the terrain as you wish within your 81 block starting area.

Setting up your game is a very important, and requires a fair bit of thought. The first decision is which God you will support. From this choice, a number of special units not available at the start to other Gods, can be chosen by you.

For those who support Order and MASSHIRO... Paladins, Druids (strong human spell casters) with Elves and Dwarves (strong independent races, with attack ability).

For those who support Chaos and ANKOKU... Thieves, Clerics, Duergars and Drow, similar in strength and abilities to those units loyal to Masshiro.

For those who are neutral and support AKA, only one unit is available, but unique in the game. The Ranger can see an area up to a radius of two blocks away, a great advantage. Its important to realise that while players can only start with those special units loyal to their own God, later in the game this can change.

You are allowed to start with up to 20 units, with a limit on the number of each type. Your King is automatically one of these units. You can start with a choice of four Human Magic Users out of a range of 15 types, and the remaining numbers are chosen from a selection of other human units in level from Slaves to Knights. All this is up to the individual player.

Finally, you choose the terrain of your 9x9 starting area. All blocks within this grid are owned by you. You are required to allocate different terrain types within certain limits. For example, you can start with 0-2 Towns. Towns are advantageous, as they boost attempts to recruit new units.. so you should start with 2. Swamps are hard to move through, and reduce most units strength if they end their turn in them, so choose the minimum number. The way you allocate your 12 different terrain types to your 9x9 map is up to you, but it is easy to make a defensive position using some of the harsher terrains.

ONLY 300 DIFFERENT UNIT TYPES...

Not many hey!! And there are more being added all the time. The whole game is based around the units a player has available, and how the player utilizes them. The units are all different, ranging in power and abilities. Its interesting to note, that most of the game mechanics can be described by explaining the abilities of units.

Attack Rate: Different units have varying attack rates, depending on their size, or nature, and are the basis for determining what damage is done when that unit attacks. Attack rates are proportional to the Defence rate, so if a unit has a maximum Attack and Defence of 3 and 15, when the defence rate is reduced to 10, the attack rate will only be 2. The attack rate can never be reduced below 1. I think the unit with highest individual attack rate is the Super Hero with 16, but its defence rating is not great. Many units are large in nature, and while there attack rate is not great, they cannot easily be destroyed either.

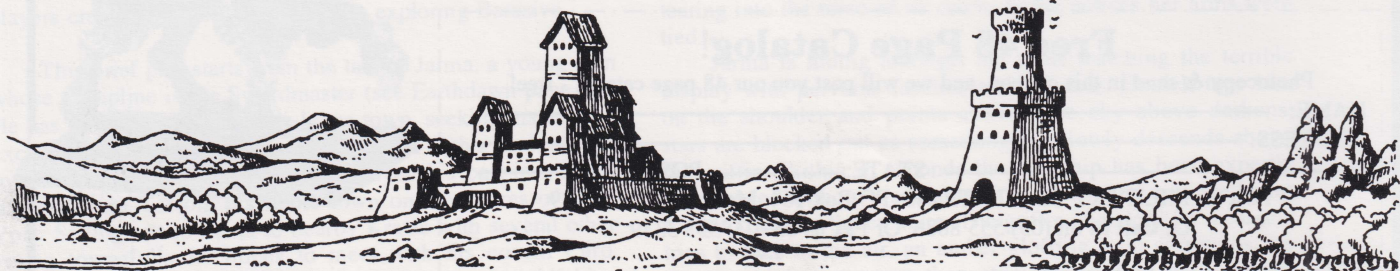
Defence Rate: Determines how long a unit survives basically. The defence rate can be effected by spells, terrain, attacks, or enemy units that engage. A unit is alive and able to perform all its functions as long as it has defence rating of at least 1. If a units defence rating is reduced below 1, it is destroyed. The rating also has another function. Every block in the game has a yield rating, which varies from 0.4 to 1.6 which is effected by all actions that occur in the block.



Camping and Recruiting severely decrease a blocks yield, and recruiting particularly, uses yield to determine what size the recruited unit will start at, the higher the yields involved the stronger the unit starts. For a unit to conquer a block, and move into it, the unit needs to have a defence rating at least 10 times the current yield value of the block. With the yield range has a maximum value at 1.6, you can quickly see that any unit with 16 or more defence rating, can take any province. Problem, most units do not start this high, and many small units cannot reach this big, and are not designed for conquest.

Action Points: Each unit has a set amount of action points that determine what a unit can do each turn. They range from units like the slow Golem, who with 8 action points has difficulty doing more than one action a turn, up to Cavalry with 40 action points. Every action takes points. Casting a spell, moving, attacking, engaging, recruiting. For example, it takes 8 points to cast a spell, 13.3 points to move diagonally through a Bog, 20 points to engage an enemy unit. The important factor here is that any unit can complete an action, if it has any fraction of its movement points left. Say a unit has used 19.9 of its 20 points, it can still cast a spell. The exception to this rule is Recruiting. You can only recruit if you have at least 10 action points left.

Saving Throw: All units have a percentage chance of not being affected by a spell cast against them. Your King is almost impervious to spells with a saving throw of 95%. Many Human units are easily effected by magic, and have low saving throws. Normally the higher the saving throw the better, but when you are trying to throw a spell with a beneficial effect, it can be a hindrance.





Charisma: Used to affect the percentage chance of recruiting a new unit. There is a chance of recruiting one of a unique set of available unit types from each terrain. There is a more of a chance in such terrains as Farms, Towns, and a low chance in harsh terrains such as Fire Wall or Ice Sheet. With each terrain, the more powerful units are much harder to recruit. For example in a Castle, there is a 2% chance of recruiting a Prince, and a 45% chance of recruiting a Slave... There is also a 1% chance of recruiting a Magic User, no matter what terrain type. A unit's Charisma is added to the terrain's percentage range to give a greater chance of recruiting. Some units such as your King, Heroes, Bards etc. have very high Charisma ratings. Recruiting from a Town also gives a bonus of 25%. So, for example, your King with a Charisma of 45, in a Town (+25), recruiting into an adjacent Valley (46% range), could not fail to recruit each turn. There are some factors against recruiting. It decreases your defence strength by 3, and you can only recruit once per block and/or unit, per turn.



Spells: Many units have one or more spells available to cast. Your King can cast any of the 99 spells available. Other Magic Users specialize in areas. For example the Transmuter specialises in mutation, polymorph and enlargement spells. A Warlock, in the combat spells like fireball, disintegrate and lightning bolt. Many of the spells available negate other spells, many create new and unusual units to help you in your conquest, and many change the terrain of the map.

Magic Points: Every spell costs magic points to cast. This can range from many cheap spells such as Sleep for a cost of only 4, up to the mighty Wish spell, at 80 points, where the player submits the effect of the spell for adjudication by the GM. All units have magic

points with which to cast spells. All units can cast a basic set of spells which are more information gatherers, such as Spell 94 Describe Unit. Each turn a unit's magic points increase. A King increases by 10 a turn, a Magic User by 7 and all other units by 4. The amount of magic points used to cast a spell can be affected by your Chosen God. The turns are cyclic in nature, with 4 phases of moons, placed there by the Gods. If the current moon is Mappiruma, and you are loyal to Masshiro, the cost of the spell is halved. The same with those loyal to Ankoku, and the moon is Yahan. The exception again is the neutral God Aka. When the moon is either Akatsuki or Yuyami, those loyal to Aka have their spell costs reduced by 25%. This is a great advantage and it is often worth waiting until a favourable moon, to cast a spell or two on the cheap. The only limit then, is a unit can only cast a maximum of 3 spells per turn, as long as it has enough action points to do so.



Special Attack: Some units have the ability to attack adjacent enemy units without moving. A Dragon has its breath, Archers have their arrows etc. The attack ability is rated depending on the unit involved, and can rate as high as 10. Attacks reduce the defence of the enemy unit, up to (random) the maximum value of the attack ability, and it can be modified by terrain, magic items etc. Attacks can be extremely useful. For example, a unit attacking an enemy unit without the attack ability, will not suffer a counter-attack.

Swim/Fly: Some units have the ability to swim, which means the action points required to move through river or sea blocks is greatly reduced. Units that have the ability to fly have the greatest advantage of all. They move through all terrains, with the minimal cost, and are great for grabbing more territory.

Experience: All units gain experience as they complete actions. While it has never been detailed in the rules, aggressive actions such as engaging an enemy unit seem to gain the most points. Experience has two effects. Firstly, some units can train up to higher level units. This is achieved when the reach 100 experience points, the experience level reverts to 10 points, and the unit trains to a new type immediately. The other effect experience has, is in combat. Experience modifies the attack points when engaging an enemy unit, and at higher levels, can have a remarkable effect. Experience has a maximum level of 400 points, and in many games, this level has been reached, resulting in very powerful units.

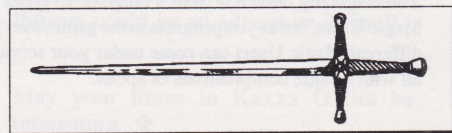
Morale: The other factor that effects the damage done when engaging a unit, is morale. The formula is

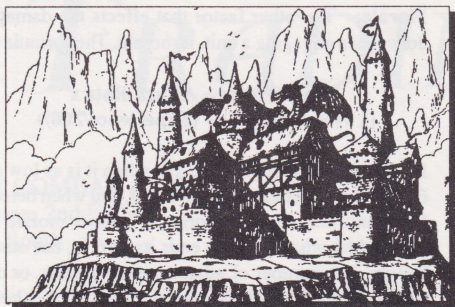
$$\text{Attack Points} = \text{Attack Rate} \times (1 + (\text{Morale}/100) + (\text{Experience}/200))$$

Morale ranges as high as 90, but when it is as low as 60, a unit may retreat when attacked, and when below 50, a unit may desert. Normally a unit's morale is affected by what terrain it ends its turn in, but other factors, like number of adjacent enemy units, or no friendly units in range also have an effect. Watch how quick the morale dives when a Curse spell is thrown on a unit. Morale also effects the decision by a unit whether it should counter-attack/engage when attacked/engaged by an enemy unit. Some spells use morale as the saving throw percentage, to see if they have effect, such as Charm.

Adjustment: At the end of every turn, every unit's defence rate is increased by 1. But terrain type also effects the adjustment of defence rate at the end of a turn. Most units have the same adjustments, but many units because of their type, have special adjustments. For example, most units suffer a loss of 15 defence points when ending a turn in a river, enough to kill many units, but a Pirate unit does not suffer any loss. Most units receive +2 to defence rate in Farms, but the majority of Undead creatures receive no bonus. The normal way to increase the defence rate of units in the quickest possible time is to Camp in Plains, which receives a +3 bonus, but leaves the unit's defences low if attacked.

Attack Bonus: The majority of units in the game are effected by terrain when they engage an enemy unit. Most receive a +1 to attack when engaging to or from a Hill or Wood block. Most units attack rates are divided by 2 when engaging out of, or into Bogs or Swamps. Units whose home is Bogs or Swamps would not receive this negative modifier, and maybe even receive a bonus in attacking from swamp, like a Bunyip. Units, as they train to higher levels gain some very powerful modifiers to their attacks. For example Concripts have normal attack modifiers, but when they train to Militia, they receive a double modifier to attack rate into, or from Castles, Farms and Towns.





Defence Bonus: The reverse is true for defence rate. Many terrains provide a defence bonus for units occupying them, like castles, which halve the attack rate of units engaging them. Once again, special or trained units, which receive a bonus for attack in particular terrains, usually receive a defensive bonus also. Again, so do units specific to a terrain type. For example, Mastodons in Ice Sheets divide the attack rate of an enemy unit engaging them, by 3.

Aggression Rating: This is a player set level ranging from 1 to 5, which is given to your whole empire. Level 1 means your units will never engage, up to level 5, engaging all other units. Problem is all units have their own aggression rating which players never get to find out about, which could override your command. Most units have low aggression ratings, and will obey, but those that don't can usually be spotted by their nature... evil creatures such as Demons are aggressive. Berserkers will always engage, no matter what you tell them. And what does it matter anyway... if you are out to do well, you should be set at Level 5, attacking anything and everyone!!

Well that all the abilities of units, but they can also be grouped into set categories.

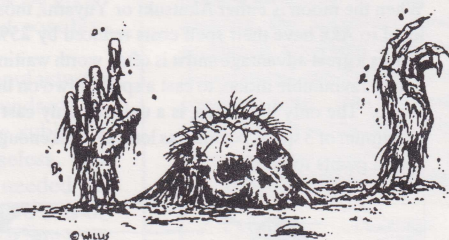
Human Units: The most common unit, ranging from the lowly slave unit up to devastating Legions. The majority of Human units are unique in that they can train to a higher level, when they reach 100 experience points. For example, Heroes can increase to Champions, which can train to Super Heroes. This means the smallest weakest human unit, with time, can train to new levels, reaching new skills and abilities.



Magic Users: You start the game with a choice of 4 Magic Users, who's spells will influence the way you expand. The Seer can help you see your future battlefields. The Conjurer can call forth many unusual monsters, of varying strengths and sizes, to help you fight your wars. The Enchanter, can charm enemy units, enticing them to change to your side. You originally choice is from a range of 15 types of Magic Users, but as you progress in the game, over 50 different Magic Users can come under your service, all with unique combinations of spells.

Independent Races: There are many individual racial units that have no associated units, such as Elves, Dwarves, and Dragons. They usually have unique abilities and are often very powerful. The three I have mentioned are some of my favourite units in the game.

Monsters: There are many monsters, ranging in size from small, such as Gnats (the smallest unit in the game) through to medium, such as Cockatrice, up to large size, such as Dinosaurs. Many of the monsters are special, like flying or seas creatures.



Undead: Ghosts, Ghouls, Skeletons, and more, are usually raised from the dead by the incantations of Magic Users.

Familiars: A few special units and Magic Users have the ability to find a familiar for other units. While not actually units themselves, familiars add to the unit they accept as their master, giving added spells, or new abilities and strengths. Its unfortunate that you have no control over the kind of familiar that chooses you, and with such a large range, you could be stuck with a parasitic Tick, or be blessed with an all powerful Dragonet.

Dimensional Beings: Units lured from the ethereal plane, such as Genie's, or powerful Demon Lords, and Elementals. Most have some magic ability, and when summoned by a magic User, are not always obedient.

Unique: Its the only way to explain them. Your King is unique, in that he can cast all spells, and that you can only ever have one King. The three God units, Masshiro, Ankoku and Aka, are unique, and the most powerful units in the game. You may never encounter them, but if you do run into one, and its not your God, don't hang around.

MAGIC ITEMS EVERYWHERE...

Scattered throughout the map, are Magic Items with different effects. Some allow you the ability to cast spells, others increase your Attack or Defence Rating, in fact they can cover almost every aspect of the game. They are gained by the first unit to conquer the block, and can be transferred, stolen or lost in combat. Its not uncommon for Magic Items to do the rounds of several units or empires, in large wars. They make a considerable difference, and almost without exception, are beneficial. So if you see one laying about in an adjacent block, go for it.

VICTORY... As you progress, you are given a rating based on your experience, and the current size of your empire. This rating will progress you through the title ranks, starting as a Knight, progressing through 24 ranks to finally King and Queen... and victory. Now, again it is not fully explained in the rulebook, but the factors that most effect your rating, are the number of blocks you control, the number of units and the total defence ratings. So get out there, and expand as fast as you can...

TACTICS...

So you want to make the most of your turn, here are some hints..

Getting Started

✓ Choose as many of your special troops as you feel you can. And when it comes down to it, I favour supporting Masshiro, as the Druids can cast Familiars, as well as the effective Dwarves and Elves.

✓ When it comes to Magic Users. Shaman, Conjurer and Necromancer are good because they create new units with which to expand. The Enchanter has a slow start but can target some powerful NPC units to Charm once they are located. The Seer is also worth having, as he can cast most of the map or vision spells that many other players eventually have to use their King for. Save your King for big important spells, like Wishes, Summon Dragon etc.

✓ Start the majority of your units on the edge of your starting area, to immediately conquer unowned blocks.

✓ Many blocks will have yields too high for you to take initially. Make sure you avoid them, and end your moves in Farms if possible, or Plains and then Camp, action points permitting. A tactic is to disperse Plains on the edge, and move units out conquering, then back into the Plains to Camp, until the units are big enough to take all blocks.

✓ cast spell 95, Terrain Map, as soon as possible, whether you can cast it in your cheap phase, or not. The map gives you a 50 by 50 map showing all terrain, and immediately puts you in the situation of knowing what areas to head for, and where to avoid.

✓ Each empire will have a 5 block buffer between them, so you will not be taking hexes belonging to other players immediately. In this buffer zone there are often valuable Magic Items, and terrain such as Farms, which players cannot start with. There could also be NPC empires dispersed in these buffer zones, and it is worth removing them, as they recruit prolifically.

As the Game Progresses

✓ Save you big spells for your cheap magic phases, when you can cast 2-3 spells, with the magic points that would normally only allow you to cast 1 spell. In my mind, Summoning Dragons has to be one of the best spells to cast, as they Fly, Attack, have 30 Action Points, and big to boot. They have a habit of dominating the map by whizzing around taking 5 blocks, then engaging an enemy unit, when most units would be flat out just engaging.

✓ Later in the game, your home area will have untouched regions that will have built up its yield value to the maximum level. These are good areas to Recruit from, for strong starting units. Maximize your recruiting every turn. Many of your small units will have to remain insular in your empire, but they can recruit. Nothing better than seeing a Slave recruit a Knight!

✓ Cast the Spell 95 Terrain Map frequently. Its other effect is to show you all blocks you currently own, which allows you to determine if any incursions have occurred. Normally you can only see details of blocks adjacent to your units, so this spell can give you a complete report each time you cast it.

✓ Non Player Empires will be encountered everywhere. There will be two types. Those originally set up, such as the Dragon Wing, and the Minotaur

Empire. Then there are those empires dropped after players become inactive. Do not take these empires for granted, just because the computer is controlling them. The program for NPC empires is effective, there actions are based on previous aggression, and they do expand, often at alarming rates.

✓ Cast those spells which give you more information, every turn if possible. They can be cast by any unit. Spell 42 Communicate, allows you to find out details of the other empires, if cast on a block they own. Spell 76, Describe Item, allows you to discover the abilities of Magic Items. Spell 94, Describe Unit is used to find out details of units, not included on the turn sheet, such as attack modifiers.

✓ There is no formal alliance system between players, but that does not stop players from coming to agreements when they encounter each other. The map is not continuous, it does not rap around. So players who are near the edge of the map, can use them as safe borders, allowing them to concentrate in set directions. In my games so far, I've always started near the middle.

GIVE IT A TRY...

Warriors and Wizards is definitely an empire building game, but at least the game will be finite. I can see the end game coming down to several massive empires, fighting on several borders with hundreds of

units, and accruing massive points each turn, nearing closer to the end rank of King/Queen.

The part I find most enjoyable, is discovering new abilities or modifiers for different units, and using them against other players to maximum effect. The game is large in concept, and varies with how the game is run. Some games are run with limited orders per turn, or unlimited. Some games are run on a minimum of 11 day turn-around, while other games are run, with all turns processed at the same time, and orders prioritized. My choice is usually for limited orders and simultaneous processing, as its fairer, and players can't buy their success.

The game has a lot of scope, and will appeal to any player who likes starting small, and building up to enormity. There is so much to learn about the huge number of units available, that information gathers like myself are happy, and the fact that the rules are well set out, makes it easy for a beginner to PBM to master the game. The leader of my first game for example, is playing his introduction to PBM, and beating veterans and all.

**"I recommend it to all,
as value for money."**

Warriors and Wizards is available in Australia through Roma Games. PO Box 1957, Toowoomba, 4350, Qld. It's also available in New Zealand through Circle Games, PO Box 105 320, Auckland. Warriors & Wizards is also currently running in the other major PBM countries of USA, Germany, Europe and England.

WIZARD...

Warriors and Wizards has a computer assist program for IBM Compatibles called Wizard, which makes completing turns a breeze.

You have no advantage over other players not using Wizard, except ease of play. You complete your orders with the program, send the disk to the GM, he transfers the orders, updates the turn on your disk and mails it back to you. The GM loves you, because you have done all the hard work of inputting the turn, and you can't blame him for any input errors!! You receive a discount for extra orders because of the minimal effort involved for the GM, and with the disk, you also receive a paper copy of your units, and turn results.

Instead of posting the disk, you can upload your orders to Roma Games BBS "Silverfall" on (076) 393156 (24hrs >9600 baud). You can also download your results this way and save \$1.00 per turn. It is the ultimate way to play the game... I definitely recommend it ■



Dear Roma Games,
please send me my *free* turn, *free* setup and *free* rulebook in **Warriors and Wizards** and entry me into the lucky random draw to receive one of five 12 months free subscriptions to **Australian Realms**.

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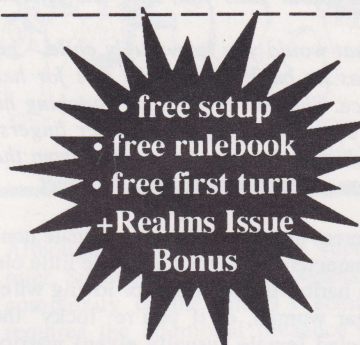


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A Woman's Scorn

Written & Illustrated by Karen Ogden

Khai twiddled the sapphire and gold ring on his finger in annoyance. He detested the merchant sector of the city, but what could one do when one needed to make something made in a hurry. He had his best chance of real money and position if he could gain the confidence of the Baron. But he must look the part. The tailor had been recommended to him as one skilled with the needle and quick in delivering.

Khai handed the tailor coinage and turned to leave. A young girl with dirty face and matted black hair looked up and smiled at him as he opened the door.

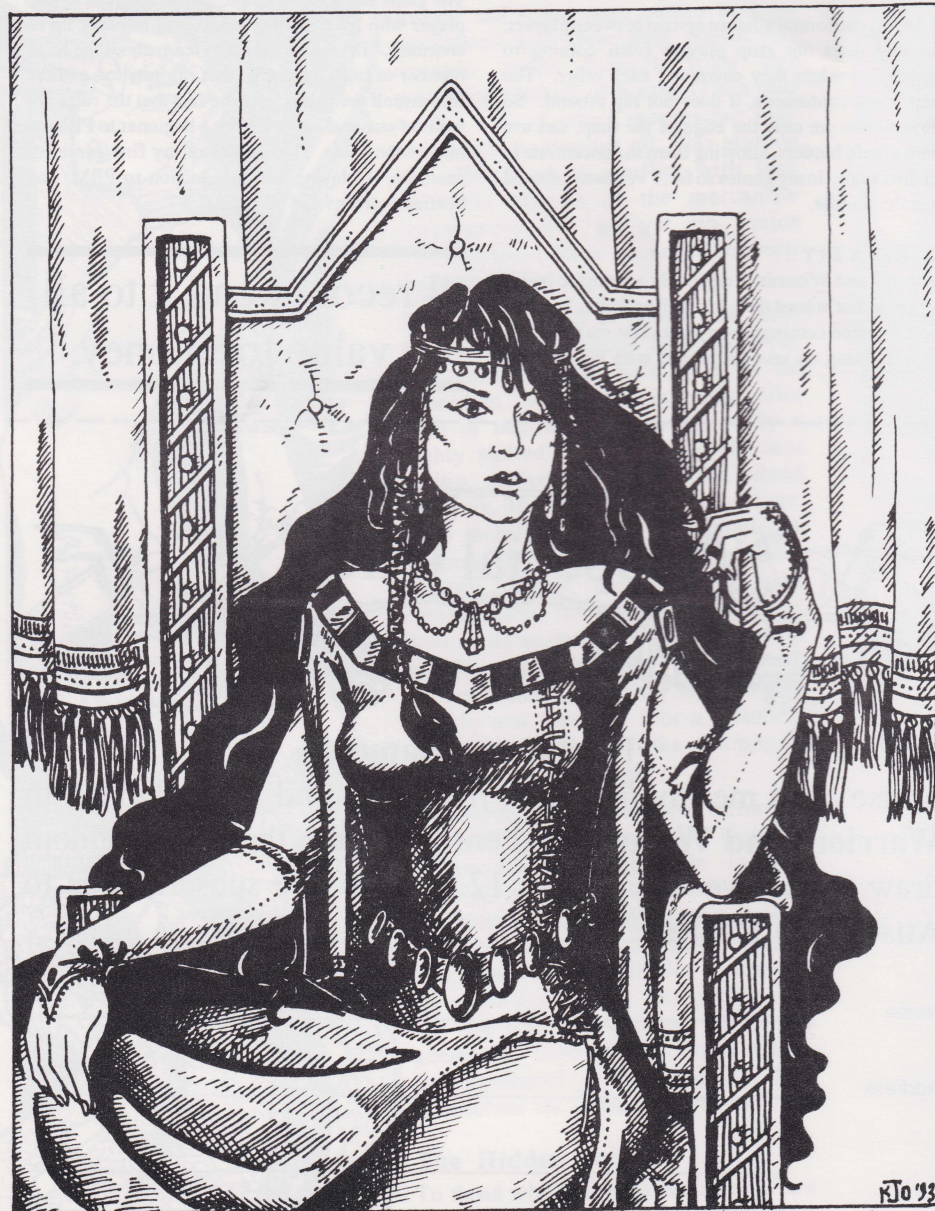
"The colour suits you, sir," she offered politely.

"What would you know, ugly child," he snorted as he back handed the girl for her impudence. She fell to the floor clutching her left eye, blood trickling through her fingers. She watched as he wiped the blood from the ring before pushing his way into the street...

Most referees usually relegate the female non-player characters to minor roles - the little old lady, the harlot, the suffering or loving wife, the beggar woman, or if you're 'lucky' the scantily clad female (usually elven) warrior with big boobies.

The 'daughter in need of rescue' syndrome is all too common with the only variation being whether the father is a king, baron, chieftain, rich merchant, or farmer. More often than not, the female character concerned is just window dressing (as little as possible seems preferable). Her name is mentioned in passing, then all other details are glossed over. Given this scenario, the players mentally note "Mission: Rescue Female, fight monsters, collect any loot, maybe get sexual favours in gratitude to her rescuers, and perhaps an Earldom with huge tracts of land." It is a tired formula which does not help the image of women in role playing games!

Well, what if she doesn't want to be rescued by boorish male player characters? In the days of arranged marriages, usually without the consent of the woman concerned, some women may do anything to avoid life-long bonding to an overweight, older, smelly warrior who only wants instant gratification when he returns from the battlefield. Perhaps the only way to escape a male dominated future a girl has to plot her own abduction,



then abscond to marry the one she loves, join bandits or even lead a life of adventuring. On one occasion I used this idea quite effectively. The lady in question was the daughter of a mage who'd promised her in marriage to a local noble for various political reasons. She detested the noble, of course. She also detested the closeted life her father led in pursuit of his magical research. To escape the boredom she took long rides into the local hills

where she met the leader of a bandit group. In true clichéd tradition, she fell in love with the bandit leader and fled her home to join him as his wife. The mage, assuming his daughter had been taken against her will, asked his past apprentice (a player character who, incidentally, had mentioned in his character background that he loved his teacher's daughter) to rescue her. The player's party followed their mage on his quest to save his

love from the clutches of the bandits, winning against almost impossible odds, only to find her staring back at them down the shaft of a drawn arrow.

This scenario served several purposes. First it gave some wonderful opportunities for the player to role play using the background he had written. Second it provided the party a 'good' motive to attack the bandits. Third it developed some interesting political ramifications as the noble was left out in the cold. And finally it meant that the player mage had ongoing difficulty acquiring spells as his master was none too pleased with the outcome.

This illustrates how a woman can be more than single dimensional plot device and shows how important it is to use player's own background detail.

Another option is the big beefy fighter who is a bit of a loner because he is secretly searching for the noble who killed his mother. When he finds the offender he fails to account for the noble's wife who isn't about to let her meal ticket die. The pair form a formidable partnership.

Or what of the dear little old lady that the players take for granted and abuse when she doesn't co-operate completely with their unreasonable demands. She has children and grandchildren. Woe betide if she is harmed as one of her kin may be Captain of the guard, or a powerful mage, or the local magistrate.

The harlot is popular with a lot of male players who think its a real laugh to have their way with her in a fantasy session. But while they are sleeping, she may turn out to be a member of the local assassin's or thieves guild. Or she could be a spy for a rival party, or she may be diseased and sent by an enemy to infect the players. In a year's time, she could have the cavalier's only son and demand her son's birthright from the player!

The suffering wife could be looking for a lover to add spice to her life, and one of the party is an eligible bachelor. But watch out. Her husband is very jealous and very big! She may claim she is being beaten by her husband, and her pleas for justice may end up with the players facing justice themselves for injury or even murder of the husband.

The beggar woman the party habitually ignores or insults could be a holy priestess, sworn to poverty but willing to reward the benevolent with healing. She could also be a polymorphed dragon after some fun. Or she might just be an old woman begging.

The scantily clad, female elven warrior with the big breasts? She would be very cold and very stupid. Warriors need protective clothing - all over their bodies - or they die. And if she was that well endowed, any major physical exertion would be very painful. Chainmail beside skin chafes!

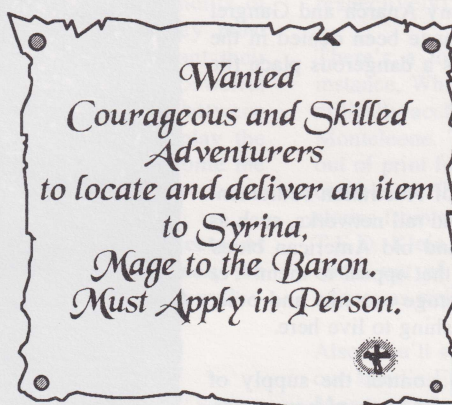
The most important rule to remember when players are misusing female non-player

characters is that a woman's revenge hits where it will hurt the most. Killing is too good for them. I find the best form of revenge is the slow, painful one. This rarely involves death of the victim. Instead I troll through the character backgrounds, looking for the Achilles heal.

I once had a player who was a loyal cleric, Galeron. Unfortunately for him, he had an eye for the ladies. He met a woman, dressed as a fellow cleric, with whom he fell madly and passionately in lust. He did all the right things. Married her and gave her his magical mace and ring of protection as wedding presents. They adventured together with the party over several months as they searched for several magical orbs (which would restore balance to a ravaged kingdom). Finally, the group found their first orb which glowed a brilliant green under the touch of the party's other cleric, Nyissa, who found it could be used for healing. One by one, she healed the party until she came to Galeron;s wife who flinched away from the orb. Nyissa sensed a surge from the orb as it began to burn furiously. She reached out to touch Galeron's wife who screamed in horror, disappearing in a rush of flames.

Galeron was stunned, the player was stunned and the rest of my players scratched their heads. I was peeved. I had set up the revenge. She was a cleric of an evil church personally humiliated by a member of the Galeron's church. She was plotting to destroy an artifact of Galeron's church which he had come by and was trying to return to its rightful place. Although I had failed in the revenge, the situation had provided some pretty good role playing, a new quest for the party and a personal dilemma for Galeron, trying to explain his fratination to his superiors.

And what happened to our little urchin girl? Well she hooked up with the Baron's mage, became his prized apprentice through unheard of diligence, and after several years of study and adventuring advanced to being the second most powerful mage in the land. All for revenge...



Moth pulled the parchment from the town square's Hiring Post and handed it to Khai. Khai smiled. Maybe this job would regain him the Baron's favour.

The mage's quarters were opulent. The walls lined with tapestries and velvets worth a small ransom. This job could restore some of

his lost fortune. The servant led them into a large room with ornately tiled floor which rang under their footsteps. The mage sat at the fat end. They could see her profile as they walked up to the large oak desk and chair.

As Syrina turned to face them, Khai saw the flowing black hair sway away from her face, and the piercing eye. The left eye was partially closed by a deep scar.

"Do you remember me?" she asked.

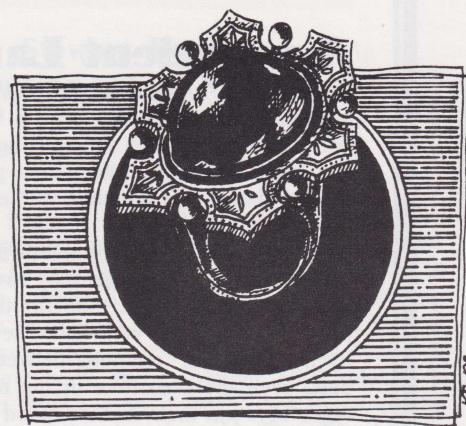
Khai stared blankly back and twisted his signet ring nervously. One could not forget such a face. Be he could not remember this woman. She looked down at the ring. It was beautifully carved with a dragon of gold encircling a sapphire.

"That is all that is left of your family fortune, isn't it," she stated calmly.

"How... how did you know?" he whispered.

Khai felt pain sear through his body, starting at his finger tips.. A piercing blue light consumed him. He could faintly hear a voice echo in his tightening skull...

"I am the ugly child., I always remembered that ring."



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A BLOOD RED LAND

Vampire in Australia

By Marianne Payne

"I've been dead for fifteen years,
with a hey hey nony nony no"

Halo by Severed Heads

An Ancient Land

The absence of European settlement in Australia, and the mysterious disappearance of the Lupine tribe of the Bunyip left the continent and surrounding islands apparently free of non human entities. The native peoples still however have tales of things that go bump in the night.

With discovery and subsequent settlement of Australia, the kindred rushed to fill what they have seen as a void. 200 years though have left little time for the many clans to establish power. Without the established territories and little influence by the Carmilla, relations between the clans are strained at best, even more so than in the near constant civil war that rages between them in the United Kingdom. With individuals this ranges from forced cordiality, to (more often) open hostility as the kindred struggle to gain power in this new land of rich resources. The distribution of population in Australia has lead the kindred (with two notable exceptions) to be focused almost exclusively in the southern population centres, and along the Gold Coast.

The chaotic situation has allowed many Anarch and Gangrel Princes to claim the power that they have been denied in the old worlds. Night time Down Under is a dangerous place for any who venture beneath it's cloak.

Family Ties

Nosferatu - The general openness of Australian settlement and lack of large sewer and underground rail networks, such as those existing throughout European and old American cities gives the Nosferatu few places to live that appeal to them. Yet the major cities, with their deep sewerage systems and other dark places, provide homes for any wishing to live here.

Tremere - Apart from wishes to control the supply of resources, which some Tremere see as a path to power, the major draw-card is the magic of the Dreamtime. Little is known about it, and the during white settlement, the Tremere did not have the influence in the colony to halt the killing of most of the native wizards. The search for any survivors, their descendants, or secrets of their power is a high priority for



most Tremere. Of all the clans they are most likely, other than the Gangrel to be found outside the cities.

Ventrue - The Ventrue usually just wish to control for the sake of control. They can be found in all cities, especially in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne, where they are often found supporting business and government deals and trying to undermine the authority of the Anarch Princes. There are Ventrue involved in the Sydney Olympic bid.

Brujah - Among the first to arrive in any number, Brujah clan members felt out the new continent, and provided much of the news back to the Old world. The existence of a tribal clan structure in New Zealand was a large draw-card, with many feeling that they could carve out a new independent state, away from the politics of the elders. The rise in the number of bikie gangs has been a result of this.

Toreador - Most found in Australia will have been 'born' here, and view it with a certain amount of disdain, as well as viewing it as culturally inferior to both Europe and the USA. The majority tend to gravitate to Victoria, although Queensland also provides an attraction.

Malkavian - Also among the first to arrive, many as convicts, they are perfectly at home wandering the massive suburban sprawl that characterises Australian cities. Many roam throughout Queensland, preferring it to the colder south. The best place to find a Malkavian however, is at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Madi Gras.

Gangrel - Of all the foreign clans, the Gangrel have established the best hold in Australia. The wide expanses of forest that existed in the early years of settlement, and the apparent lack of Lupine tribes has provided Gangrel migrants, especially those from Europe with a new home. This clan is the most widespread throughout Australasia and can be found in most forested areas in Tasmania, Queensland, South West WA, New Zealand and even in the tropical north. As Australia continues to deforest the continent, they find that they have more in common with any Garou immigrants than they think.

Anarchs - Along with the Gangrel, the Anarchs have found Australasia to be a new paradise. With the power structures of the elders of the major clans tenuous at best, the Anarchs have found themselves a playground that is level, and even in their favour much of the time.

Ravnos - No organised presence. Most Ravnos arrived either during early settlement, or during the 1950's 60's.

Assimite - They have little interest apart from some employment in kindred 'politics'.

The other lesser clans have no coherent presence, although individual members of all clans can be found, enjoying the chaos to indulge in a little taste of Anarchy.

Last Laugh

The Carmilla recognises that there is a threat from it's lack of control in this land, but to them, Australia is of much lesser importance than the fires of anarchy that are raging along the west coast of the USA, and although the Iron curtain has fallen to mortals, it has become stronger than ever to the Kindred. Then there is the Jyhad.

The Sabbat too keep their baleful eyes on this land, for here many of their more bizarre habits can go unnoticed by the kindred, and even if they are discovered, the scrabble for power keeps any organised opposition to a minimum.

The Garou are attempting to make up for the shame of the disappearance of the Bunyip, and control the bush surrounding the cities. Few are actually seen, but those kindred who venture out of the cities and suburbs are rarely heard from again, so the bush must be thick with them.

Dead Eyes Opened

Although the Princes have no solid evidence, rumours persist of encounters with two unknown clans of the Kindred that seem to be in some way linked. Most ignore these stories, and put them down to the large number of Anarchs that inhabit this land. Some have been curious to discover the true nature of these creatures, who are said to look like Nosferatu on a bad day, and have command of magics that rival the Tremere. Those that do investigate find that their searches inevitably lead beyond the safety of the cities, and even beyond the strips of bush around them that the Garou claim as their own. What lies hidden in the outback is unknown to almost all of the kindred, and those few that succeed in running the Garou gauntlet are keeping their knowledge secret.

"Shivers ran down her spine and she contemplated returning to the city. Over the two week journey she had thought that many times, but always the desire for the power that she could gain from an encounter with one of the legendary 'old ones', the 'illa booker mer ley urrie urrie', those whose soul will not die overcame that urge. .

As the moon cleared the distant hilltops, she heard a voice from the darkness, startling her. The dialect was ancient, the voice deep and grinding "Ngai-i murnna". As her mind raced to recognise the phrase, needles of pain ripped through her flesh, darkness came with the thought, 'I am very hungry'..."



Namorodo At Your Window

(to be featured in issue 14)

The Analytical Engine BOOK REVIEWS

by Peter Crank

*From the IRA to Space Opera,
Barbara Cartland
to Gary Gygax;
Art or Hard Sell?
Where will you spend your
Dollar!*

THERE are some difficulties that can't be avoided in this reviewing game. The first is that tastes differ. The second is that the quality of books in the marketplace does not show a normal distribution. Good editorial practice should weed out the real duds, but some duds will remain nonetheless. I will not shy from reviewing duds if I think there is some value in it. That value may be in sending a message that bad publishing practices should be avoided (the practice of publishing sub-standard crud just to cash in on a trend, for example), or to save you the pain of wasting your money on a dud when there are so many more deserving titles around. Considering that a paperback costs between \$10 and \$15 an opinion on a book's worth is probably a good thing.

THE QUESTION of quality is subjective, no argument, but consensus leads the market to value some works more than others; that worth may or may not correlate with the books "artistic merit". For instance; no one should argue that Terry Pratchett is deserving of a Hugo Award or a Nebula (unless they introduce a category for best comedy novel of the year). There's no denying the fact that his books are fun to read, and sell like hotcakes, but Terry is just not that good a writer - funny as hell though. Judith Krantz, Barbara Cartland, and their kin, sell well and a segment of the market eat them up with no worry about their literary value. Salman Rushdie is an acclaimed artist but isn't likely to break sales records (unless Hizballah get to him, an assassination would send sales through the roof).

The reviewing process has to take into account the context into which the book should be placed. In our own corner of the literary world Dragon Lance and Shadowrun tie-ins shouldn't be considered in the same context as the latest from Bruce Sterling, William Gibson or C.J. Cherryh. One is just an entertainment product, the other strives for art as well as entertainment. But I think you know that, and if you read gaming tie-ins and mass produced fantasy epics you don't do it for the quality of the writing. You do it because you're an addict, you're hooked and can't get enough. Fair enough, "more power to your elbow", as my granny used to say. Is there a contradiction here? Yes. We are willing to ignore issues of quality to feed our need. But there are limits. For me those limits have to do with acceptable story line, no overt barriers to my "willing suspension of disbelief", and a basic level of English usage. When those limits are exceeded, I kick.

OCCASIONALLY I'll go beyond the genre boundaries to point out items that may be of interest. Two non-fiction books with a high fascination level are **Shoot to Kill** (Viking \$14.95) by Michael Asher and **Big Boys' Rules**

(Faber and Faber, \$12.95) by Mark Urban. The first is a warts-and-all description of the author's experiences in the Paras, the Territorial SAS and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (this boy is a glutton for punishment) and is a must buy for anyone with an interest in counter-insurgency. Be warned; this book does not glorify the military, it exposes it. The author has first hand experience of the less glamorous sides of the special forces and police special operations units. Learn how Paras took advantage of an IRA fire bombing of a major Belfast Department store to do some unofficial shopping. Learn the famous Para "Dance of the Flaming Arseholes". Learn how the RUC conducted a covert surveillance of a potential IRA assassination target only to discover he'd moved to America a month before.

The second book is a detailed study of intelligence gathering and special forces operations in Northern Ireland and focuses on the merits and morality of the shoot to kill policy. Mark Urban is a journalist specialising in this area and includes quotes from Mr Asher's book, so the two can be read together for added insight.

IT IS always a pleasure to come across a book published many years before that still measures up in every way with the contemporary product. **Non-Stop** by Brian Aldiss (ROC) has been reissued. Its style is tough, almost cyberpunk in its anger and aggression, and it was originally copyright in 1958! Its Aldiss' first SF novel, about a multi-generation starship that has lost it's way; ground covered by Heinlein in **Methuselah's Children** and Harry Harrison in **Captive Universe**. I also made the

following discovery among my collection while researching the topic of multi-generation starships for this column: **Phoenix Without Ashes**, the novelisation by Edward Bryant of Harlan Ellison's award winning teleplay, about a lost starship. The TV show (**The Starlost**) never materialised, which may be a good thing because I don't think the concept was meaty enough for anything but a mediocre piece of typical American TV. Imagine **Time Tunnel** meets **Lost in Space**. The **Starlost** scenario has every Earth culture contained within its own biosphere, each sphere a part of the massive conglomerate space vessel, with each sphere ignorant of the other's existence and the whole thing hurtling off God knows where. That provides the mechanism whereby our hero could have a different adventure each week in a different culture, just by opening the hidden connecting doors. A further piece of trivia associated with this is that Ben Bova (Harlan's mate) wrote a novel satirising the whole Hollywood on-again, off-again TV production thing called the **Star Crossed**. Anyway, back to **Non-Stop**! Only one quibble, poor proofing. The Greene tribe becomes the Green tribe and back again three or four times along the way. A good read despite that, especially if like me you're fascinated by the history of this genre. Aldiss was a leading light of the New Wave Movement in the seventies in the UK and penned such classics as **Barefoot in the Head**, **Prometheus Unbound** and **Trillion Year Spree** (an interesting history of the genre in which he champions Mary Shelley as the grandmother of modern Science Fiction). More recently the **Hellconia Trilogy** marked his reversion to a more mainstream style of Speculative Fiction.

BIG BOOKS are not necessarily all padding. **A Fire Upon the Deep** (Tor, \$14.95) by Vernor Vinge hefts in at 613 pages, but it's all meat. It takes place unknown thousands of years hence when humanity has moved on from mother Earth. Humankind is just one race among many, and a not very important one at that. Our galaxy is divided into "zones of thought", with the Unthinking Depths, The Slow Zone, the Beyond and the Transcend making areas of differing physical laws. These zones provide progressive levels of technological and mental achievement. Faster than light travel is not possible in the slow zone (where Earth abides), but is possible in the Beyond. What Vinge has done is turn SF convention on its head - the advanced races don't live near galactic centre, but in the galactic halo. The various races of Vinge's future are linked by a vast communication network and information is the primary trade product. Sentient software is also a feature of the Beyond, enabling computer viruses with attitude.

That actually describes the plot-line in a nutshell, big evil self-aware program from the galaxy's remote past is accidentally activated by human explorers. All hell breaks loose, humanity cops the blame. Vinge is a computer scientist and his knowledge provides solid ground for his speculations. This is a classic SF adventure story, written with a Golden Age flavour and nineties sensibilities. Vinge interleaves the high tech portions of his tale with the medieval machinations of his superbly realised aliens the "Tines". I won't say anything else to spoil your pleasure. Read it.

SHADOWRUN. I was apprehensive when these books appeared in my mail. So many gaming tie-ins are of interest only to those who play the game, or are so poorly written I can't put myself through the pain of reading them. **2XS** by Nigel Findley (Shadowrun, ROC \$12.95) and **Night's Pawn** by Tom Dowd (Shadowrun, ROC \$12.95) easily stand on their own and I am relieved of the burden of a negative review. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the Shadowrun milieu, take heed. Magic has returned to the world after a long absence. Portions of humanity have reverted to their true racial type, in this instance elves, trolls, dwarves, orcs and dragons etc. Shadowrunners are opportunists, dwellers in that grey area between law and disorder, seekers after profit by means fair and foul. They may be Cyberspace Cowboys, Bodyguards for hire, you name it. What Shadowrun provides under this

scenario is a melding of Cyberpunk and Sorcery, where characters trade Uzi fire with fire spell wielding foes and deckers (read hackers) cruise the cybernetic matrix. Of the two **2XS** is my personal favourite, Nigel Findley shows promise as a writer and has a great feel for the Cyberpunk mindset. I recommend these without reservation for fans of Cyberpunk and seekers after entertainment everywhere. The others in this Shadowrun series probably deserve looking at as well.

GARY GYGAX is certainly a busy man. The Dangerous Journeys series, like the Shadowrun novels are visible wherever good books are sold. They are packaged as one element of a "multi-genre gaming" product line and in this respect have a lot in common with Shadowrun. This is a pointer to the growing marketing skills of the gaming fraternity. Far better to push a tie-in novel at the mass market, capture the already addicted and increase your chances of pulling new victims. The **Anubis Murders** (Roc \$12.95) is good entertainment; not brilliant, but fun. I look forward to the further adventures of Magister Setne Inhetep and Rachelle (a female bodyguard/sidekick, makes a refreshing change).

THIS BOOK may be hard to find. I suggest you order it through a specialist bookseller. **Castle of Eyes** by Penelope Love (Chaosium Fiction, price unknown). Despite the Chaosium Imprint this book has no connection to gaming. What it does have is style, an

interesting story and lots of mystery. It came so close to being very good. Penelope Love obviously loves the English language and uses it to good effect. The opening pages are a delight and the demon Slaargash has real character. The main flaw is in the novel's slow pacing. I'm not saying this book is dull though, just a tad slow. There is the mystery of Allilole's identity, a concealed murder to keep us anxious and the question of the origins of the castle's inhabitants to ponder. While disfigured protagonists are not entirely unknown in fiction, I can't remember ever coming across a heroine with no hands AND amnesia. Allilole initially has no memory of how she came to be in the castle or how she became a double amputee. Her search for the truth provides the basis for the story. The castle itself is vast and falling into disrepair. It is populated by a decadent nobility, their duplicitous servants and subjects. Do the undead truly stalk the catacombs and darkened crumbling halls that no one enters, save those cast out by the nobility? Read it and discover for yourself. Recommended. Watch out for this writer, I think the future may see big things from Ms Love.

MY OPINION is not law, by all means write in and disagree with me. Give me a reasoned argument, give me examples; try and change my mind. If there is a book out there you'd like to see reviewed, drop me a line.

COMING UP, an all Australian column!



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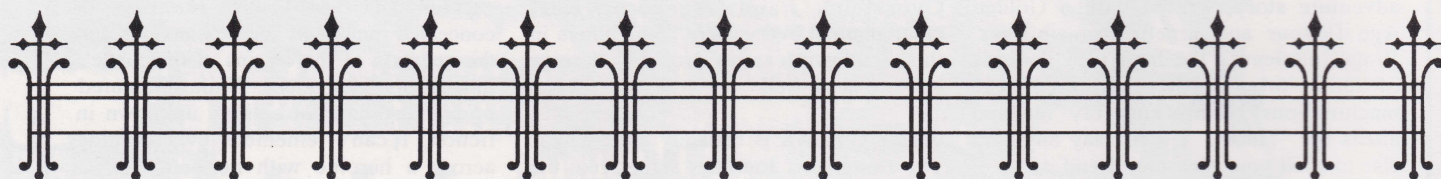
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CASTING IRON

Unofficial Rules for an Armoured Wizard in Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® 2nd Edition
by Paul Mitting



How Clumsy is My Armour?

There is a common misconception that many forms of armour were incredibly restrictive to movement and limited a warrior's ability to perform graceful or dexterous acts. The truth of the matter is that armour was designed as much as possible to allow free movement and flexibility. Any less, and the warrior inside would not be able to fight effectively.

Armour of the later styles, especially field and full plate, was fitted to the individual wearer to maximise his movement, not limit it.

Under AD&D rules, wizards cannot wear armour for two reasons. The first is that it limits their ability to gesture and posture as required for their spells. The second is that their lengthy studies do not give them time to study the martial arts, and so they have no experience or aptitude in wearing armour.

A third reason, conjectured by some, is that the metal of the armour inhibits magic in some way. This is discounted by the existing rules; some spells even go so far as to include ferrous objects as Spell Components. This possibility can be discounted as a reason for disallowing magic-users the benefit of armour.

Wizards in Armour, Why Not?

So why should wizards be denied the comfort of facing a flesh rending troll in some protective clothing? Would you want to go into the hostile AD&D world armed only with a dagger, a handful of minor spells (at low levels) and a heavy gown? What about the argument that wizards simply do not have the time or inclination to learn how to utilise armour? This can be readily disproven.

The training of any individual to put on, take off and operate in armour relies primarily on them wearing the suit whilst performing their own duties or studies. Familiarising the body to the added weight and adjusting your movements to accommodate the armour is predominantly a function of time.

After all, under the optional Non-Weapon Proficiencies system, mages invariably have many 'slots' with which to learn various skills and knowledge. Some of the skills they can

learn, whilst concurrently studying their magic, are incredibly complex skills requiring much time to learn. Take the Engineering skill for example. The mage can not only supervise and design siege constructions, he can operate siege weapons. This sort of physical skill and knowledge leaves the simple art of wearing armour looking paltry by comparison.

A proposition here then is to make a new Non-Weapon Proficiency available to magic users. Called "Armour Use", it would enable a mage to be skilled in wearing his armour and performing magic whilst so armoured. The mechanics of this I will explain later.

If you don't like that option, you can always decide that the skill is a Weapon Proficiency instead. Rather than learn Dagger or Staff the young mage could have spent his time between studies learning to function in armour. In a combat situation, I feel sure most wizards would rather rely on armour for protection than trust in their dagger skill to fend off the enemy.

Effects of Armour

The Complete Fighters Handbook has a section devoted to the various effects armour has on a character's performance. The information I present here is supplementary to this, and can be used concurrently or independently.

The first value listed in each column of the Armoured Modifications Table is the Armour Class Bonus granted by that piece or suit of armour. For example, padded armour grants an AC bonus of 2. This means the final AC would be 8, assuming no other AC bonuses were applicable. The second value listed is the modifier to the Casting Check incurred by the armour. The Casting Check will be explained further below.

Note that characters can wear 'Piecemeal' armour as per the rules provided in the Fighter's Handbook. This simply means that each part of armour worn adds the listed AC bonus and Casting Check Modifier to the character.

Spell Casting In Armour

Under normal circumstances, no mage would bother casting magic whilst armoured. Back in his tower, or at the guild, or wherever the character has a home base and feels secure the restrictions on movement are too much to make it worthwhile. When adventuring, however, without the security of solid walls to defend him from the hostile environment, creatures or adversaries the mage will inevitably find himself in situations where he would rather be armoured as well as needing to cast spells without too much restriction.

Armour Modifications Table

Armour Type	Full Suit	BreastPlate	Two Arms	Two Legs
Banded Mail	6/-10	3/-5	2/-3	1/-2
Brigandine	4/-8	2/-5	1/-2	1/-1
Bronze Plate	6/-12	3/-6	2/-4	1/-2
Chain Mail	5/-8	2/-4	2/-3	1/-1
Field Plate	8/-12	4/-6	2/-4	2/-2
Full Plate	9/-15	4/-8	3/-5	2/-2
Hide Armour	4/-12	2/-6	1/-4	1/-2
Leather	2/-6	1/-3	1/-2	0/-1
Padded	2/-6	1/-3	1/-2	0/-1
Plate Mail	7/-12	3/-6	2/-4	2/-2
Ring Mail	3/-9	1/-5	1/-3	1/-1
Scale Mail	4/-10	2/-5	1/-3	1/-2
Splint Mail	6/-10	3/-5	2/-3	1/-2
Studded Leather	3/-7	1/-3	1/-3	1/-1
Buckler	1/-5	n/a	n/a	n/a



Normally the mage can cast any learned spell by simply going through the casting process and unleashing it. He makes no dice throw to see if his spell was actually cast successfully - that is guaranteed in most normal situations. The effect of armour is to impede this casting process to the extent that the mage must make a Casting Check to see if the spell is successfully thrown. The basic throw is to roll under the Intelligence (INT) rating on 1D20. The modifier to this throw, which lowers the success chance, is the Casting Check Modifier. This is obtained from Table 1.

As you can see by examining the table, most intelligent mages would still not want to be casting whilst wearing a suit of Full Plate. An INT rating of 18 would be reduced to a Casting Check of 3 or less on D20.

Any spell attempted and failed whilst in armour is lost and must be memorised again. The mage has expended his knowledge of the spell, but the restrictions of the armour caused him to lose the spell without a result.

An option to consider here is that any natural throw to cast of 20 means the spell has misfired in some way. It could rebound back on the caster or his friends, or may have a reversed effect on his target. Perhaps you could utilise

the Wand of Wonder magic item effects (see DMG page 158) or else the Wild Surge Results table (see *Tome of Magic* page 7). I'll leave that nasty matter in the referee's capable hands.

Armour Use - The Skill

The Armour Use non-weapon proficiency enables the character to be proficient in normal movement and combat whilst armoured. The mage learns how to properly put on and take off the armour, how to maintain the armour in the field, and how to cast spells whilst so encumbered.

If using this alternative system, add Armour Use to the Wizard list for non-weapon proficiencies with a cost of 2 slots to learn the skill. There is no Check Modifier. The "Armour Use" skill could have two options for incorporation here. The first, and more limited option, is to state that no mage without the skill can ever cast magic whilst armoured. To cast any magic in armour, he takes whichever Cast Casting Check Modifier is appropriate to the armour type.

The second option is to allow any mage, skilled in Armour Use or not, to cast magic in armour. The unskilled mage takes the full penalty applicable to the armour worn.

The Armour Use proficient mage, however, can reduce the penalty by paying additional slots for the skill beyond the initial two slots. The initial two slots spent on the skill reduce the Casting Check Modifier by 1. Each additional slot spent reduces the Cast Chance Modifier by a further 1. Thus a mage who pays four slots for the skill instead of the minimum two will get a reduction of 3 off the Casting Check Modifier. If he wore Leather armour, his Modifier would be -3 instead of -6.

The Adventuring Mage

When travelling or resting, the mage will most likely remove his armour for reasons of comfort. Most mages, even the most paranoid, would not wear armour amongst fellow mages or in 'civilised' environs.

The skill the mage has developed in wearing armour is something he has learned in order to protect himself whilst in dangerous adventures. The pros of armoured protection in situations where a mage might end up in melee may outweigh the cons of a reduced chance to successfully cast spells for some players. At least now they have an option.

This system has the added benefit of placing some restriction on multi-classed fighter/mages if you'd like to apply these rules to them. Now there is a possibility that the elf in chain mail that used to prance in melee with a sword in one hand and a magic missile in the other can be embarrassed by the failure of his spell Casting Check. As with all optional rules, however, I recommend you discuss these changes with your players before you implement them in your campaign. The elf player might violently disagree with your suggestion and throw that magic missile at you.

If you decide to adopt these additions to the AD&D rules in your campaign, your mage player should always remember that her character is still more of a scholar than a fighter, and so will not discomfort herself more than she has to. If other mages are encountered when the player is armoured, she may well be looked on with contempt or pity, as physical defence is the last resort of any truly adept practitioner of magic.

Finally, the referee should always keep an eye on how his wizard classed players go using these new optional rules. If you feel that allowing mages in cast iron is too much of an advantage to them, throw in a few real handicaps of armour use.

Good examples are armour straps breaking in the midst of melee with slipping helmets to obscure vision, or arm vambraces sliding over the wrist and locking up the hand until freed, or poorly tended armour suddenly seizing up in the joints. All of these effects are likely to be disastrous to the mage wanting to cast spells, and will bring harm to even the most skilled warriors.

The possibilities are endless, so enjoy them. ■

Dice Are Dead

*Play-By-Mail &
Live Role Playing
Column compiled
by Nick Leaning*

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Australian Wizard, PO Box 1171,
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4/2 St Annes Tce, Glenelg, SA 5045
Roma Games, PO Box 1957,
Toowoomba QLD 4350
Sports Play By Mail, PO Box
14219, Melbourne Mail Centre, VIC 3000

Play-By-Mail

The 1993 Guide to Australian Play By Mail Games

Fans of *Dice Are Dead* and *Play By Mail* games are in for a special treat in the next issue of *Australian Realms* as we plan to present you with *The 1993 Guide to Australian PBM*, a special feature which will serve as the definitive guide to what is available from Australia's host of PBM companies. We'll be profiling companies and their games, giving you a pricing guide and some insights into how to succeed in PBM games.

Any PBM companies who have not heard from us yet, and want to be included in the *Guide* please contact Nick Leaning very soon. Look out for this bumper serving of PBM in issue 14 (November).

With 'that one day in September' just around the corner we present a review of....

Play On Premiers

AFL Sim from *Play By Mail Sports*

Reviewed by Adam East

Play On Premiers is an Australian Rules Football simulation run by PBM Sports out of Melbourne. Players take on the role of a coach/manager of a team in a league against eleven other teams. Each team has a squad of up to 24 real-life AFL players, from which to choose a weekly starting 18 to play against one of the other teams. Your players make the same scores as they do in that week's real life AFL games, and gain bonus scores for getting a high number of possessions.

The overall aim of the game is to win as many games as possible during the 22 game season, to become the 'Play On Premier' - something with which I'm only having mixed success at the moment. My team, the Joondalup Jazz, has a 50/50 win/loss ratio. Unfortunately, this season, the Premier will be the team on top of the Home and Away ladder, so my premiership chances are slim. But as of next season, a definite improvement will be the introduction of a Finals system for the top six teams.

Apart from this, the game runs quite well. From your initial squad of players, you can sign Free Agents, poach players from other teams, and waive your own players. A system of finance using 'Losing Points' forces you to be careful in signing big name players, with wages sure to become a pressing factor later in the season. Fortunately, extra income can be derived from investments in marketing and merchandising.

People who have a knowledge of some of the better fringe players in the AFL will have an initial advantage over those who don't, but the average armchair football fan will still do well. The game is designed to balance out the teams, so if you start off badly, you've got a better chance of poaching star players from the other teams as the season progresses. Players are limited in selection to where they play in real life, so when choosing your team you need to select a proper balance of

forwards, backs, on ball players, etc. which gives the teams a realistic feel.

Role playing (sic) is encouraged through the use of a newsletter - the actual gameplay itself deals more with player knowledge and financial aspects. The GM will photocopy and distribute a four-page newsletter for free each week. The only drawback here is that its up to one or a group of coaches (players) to actually write the newsletter - obviously the more you contribute the better it will be. Player disputes, merger rumours, trial by video, sellout crowds, its all up to you.

Norman Goetz, the GM of PBM Sports provides an excellent, friendly service, and can answer any questions you may have. The *Play On* rulebook can be obtained from PBM Sports for only \$2, with turns costing \$4 each, however multiple turn discounts are available. New Leagues are formed at the start of each year, with the actual play starting weekly from March until September. Some standby places are available in old leagues.

PBM Sports also operates several other football simulations: *Rugby Stats* (based on the NSWRL), *Soccer Stats* (based on the English Leagues), and *Gameplan* (an NFL gridiron simulation).

PBM Footnotes

The Australian Wizard, those prolific Queenslanders, are acquiring a new version of *Flights of Fantasy* coming out from New Zealand in the next few months, with a launch intended before the end of the year - which means soon! The perfect Christmas gift for your spouse... 20 turns in *FoF*?

Doug Coff of *Imagination Games* is pleased to announce due to intense interest in *Victory!* the first game will commence a month ahead of schedule. And for *Realms'* readers there is a special offer - the first three turns for free. See Doug's advertisement on the facing page for details on how to take up his offer.

Another special offer for *Realms* readers comes from *Roma Games* - Free Set Up, Free Rules, Free First Turn in *Warriors & Wizards* plus the chance to win one of 5 Subscriptions to *Australian Realms* for new players. With a newly reprinted rule book and, and laser printed turn sheets, this is one of the classier looking PBM games around. For an in depth rundown on the game, check this issue's PBM feature article - *Victory Just A Block Away* (page 34).

PBM Reviewers Wanted

With so many good games available, and our staff so busy coping with the growth of the magazine, we are in need of assistance in keeping up our PBM coverage. If you can write and would like to help us by participating in a PBM (for free!) and then writing a review (we'll pay you for it!) contact Nick at our usual address.

Next iss, the *PBM Guide* and our Live Role Play coverage returns with an article on how to start a LRP Club.

Until then Roll In Peace. 'Bye.

VICTORY!

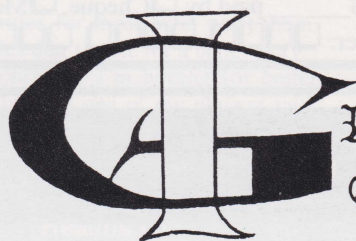
"The Battle For Europe"

Imagination Games is proud to announce the Australian release of the **Victory!** game system. We at **Imagination Games** believe '**Victory! The Battle for Europe**' is the most sophisticated Play-By-Mail wargame system to grace the Australian market. **Victory!** Incorporates a heretofore unheard of level of detail, including huge numbers of units and fantastically complex battle routines. Yet for all this detail it is still a relatively easy game to play. Players organise which units to build and where they should be sent. The computer looks after all the smaller details such as battle resolution, supply and country growth.

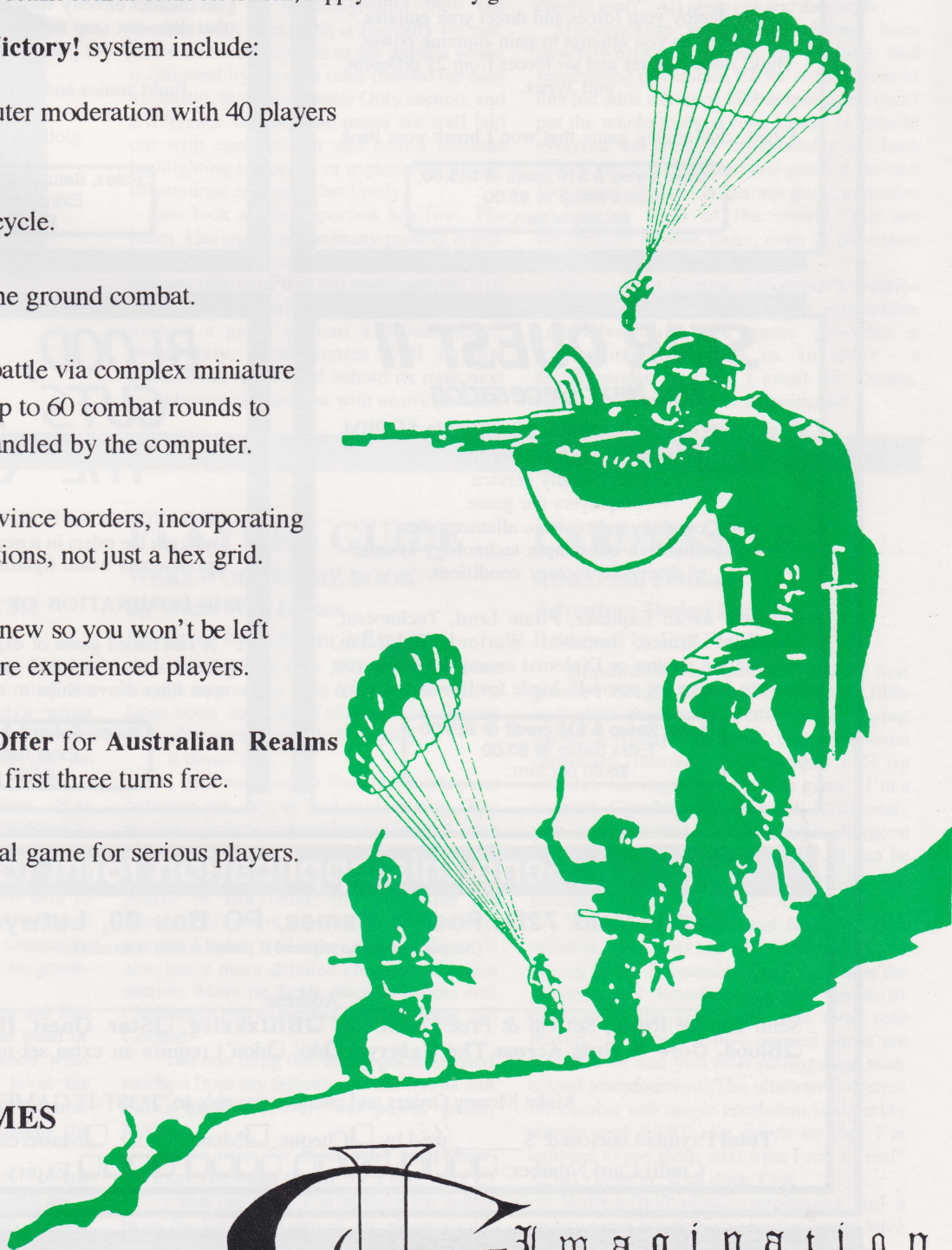
Some details of the **Victory!** system include:

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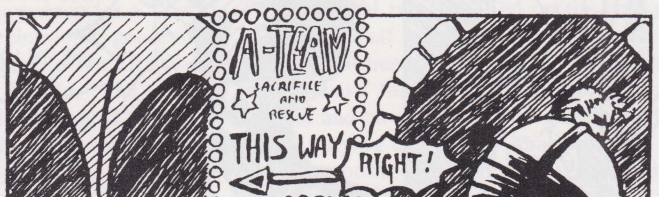
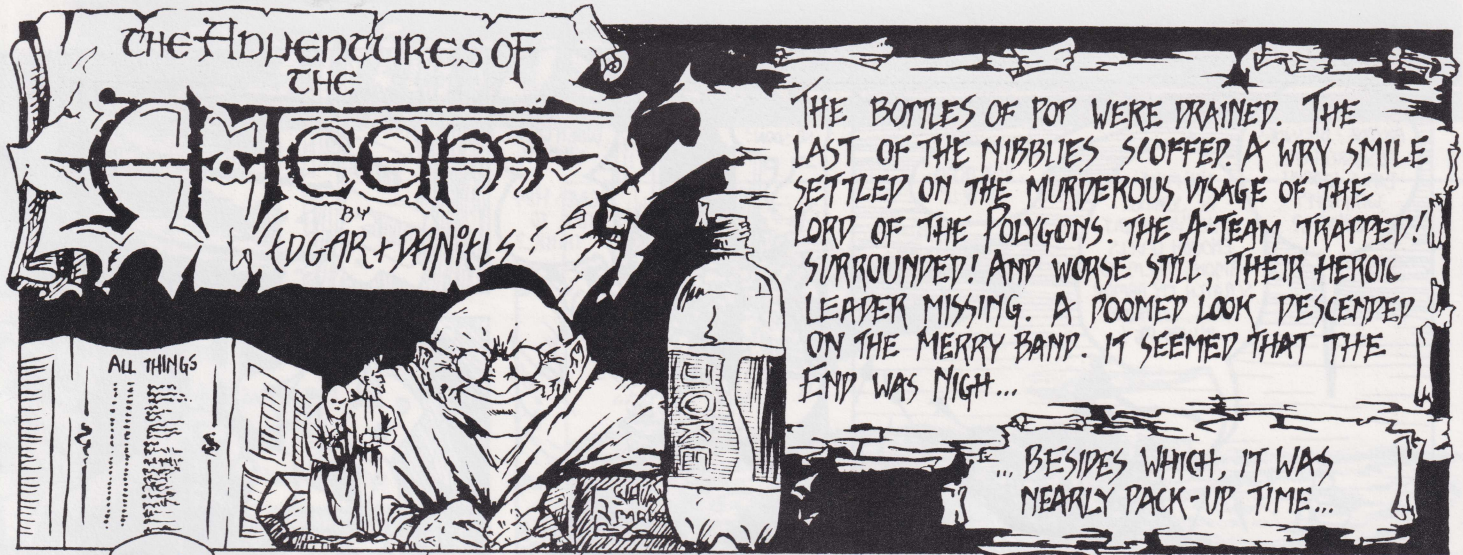
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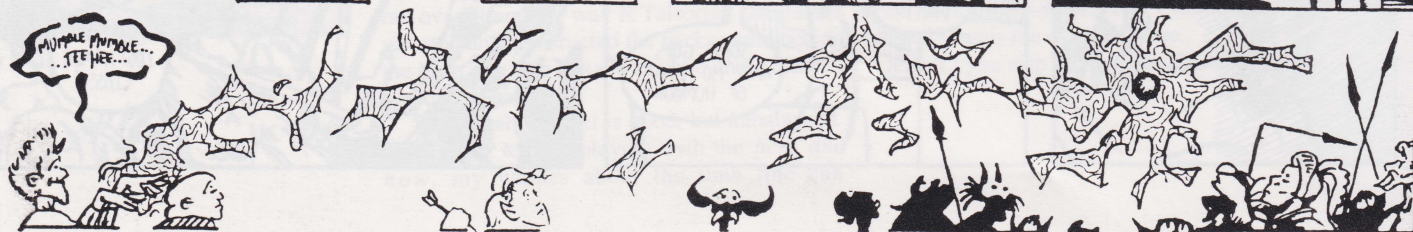
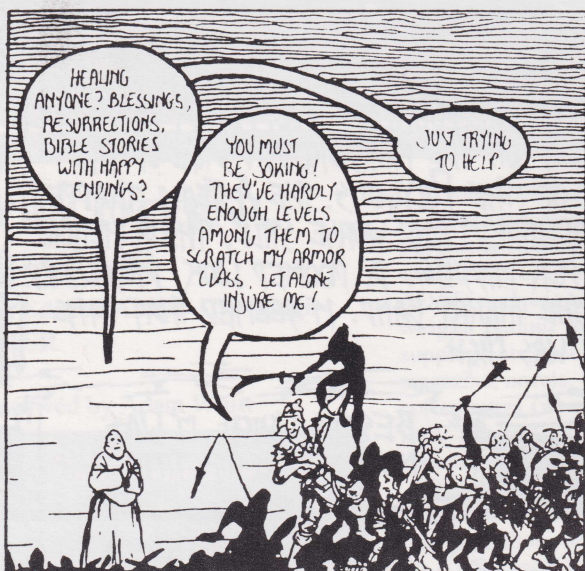
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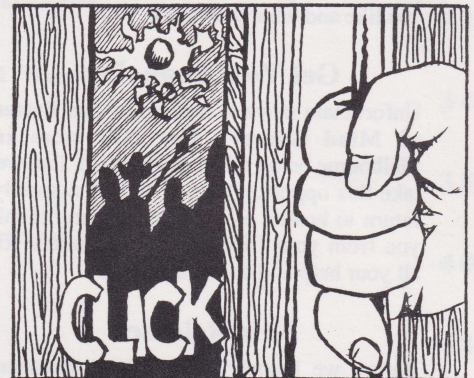
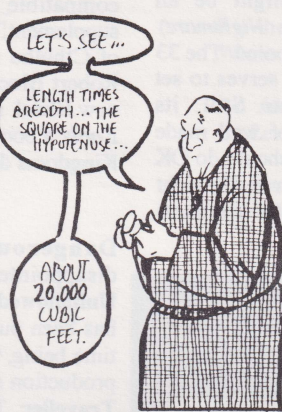
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NEWS

Readers Poll

Kris Thomas of Queensland will be a very happy individual shortly when he receives over \$250 worth of gaming products in the mail. In early August he was drawn as the winner of the Readers Poll Competition, which only required you to return your poll forms from issue 11 to us by the 30th of July. Kris will now be able to enjoy the spoils of his efforts, receiving among other things a free subscription to **Realms**, the **AD&D Monstrous Manual**, **Shadowrun**, **Werewolf**, **Battletech** and credit in the **Quest PBM**. To all the others who sadly missed out, thanks for your feedback, and remember there's always next year's poll. In the meantime we are analysing the data received, and planning appropriate changes. We are always looking for opinions and ideas from our readers, feel free at any time to send a postcard or letter and tell us what you are doing, what you are playing, what you like and what you don't.

Get Well Soon, Ian

Unfortunate news to hand is of Ian Potter of **Mind Games's** Box Hill store in Melbourne being taken seriously ill. Ian, we take this opportunity to wish you a speedy return to health, and to send a warm thank you from your friends here at **Realms** for all your help and encouragement.

New Releases

Before we launch into the new releases, we'd like to draw your attention to the **Military Simulations** Mail Order Magazine. This excellent quarterly catalogue is up to date, includes most popular games, miniatures and gaming novels, and tells you what is coming up for release in the months ahead, and best of all it is free. **Mil Sims**, as they are affectionately known, have providing their service to Australian gamers for 19 years, so check out their ad on page 33 and get on their mailing list with no obligation to buy.

As things hot up for a rash of Christmas releases we are currently wading through the calm before the storm. Even so there are several interesting new products that are detailed below;

TSR

New from TSR for **D&D** is the *Champions of Mystra* boxed set. For the **AD&D** game world of **Dragonlance** there will be the *Dwarven Kingdoms of Krynn* boxed set, the *Secrets of the Lamp* source box for **Al Qadim** and the *Elves of Athas* booklet for the **Dark Sun** setting. For fans of R.A. Salvatore, the hardback sequel to *Legacy* is now available - *Starless Night*. The *Legacy*

paperback edition is also out with a "free new chapter". Oh, those naughty marketing people at TSR! If you own the hardback, can you afford not to own the paperback, now?

Although TSR's newest board game, *Dragonstrike* looks like it might be an interactive video game (like *Nightmare*) given the packaging; don't be fooled. The 33 minute animated video merely serves to set the atmosphere of the game. Still, its impressive looking, has lots of well made and colourful components and should do OK in mainstream retail outlets given the right price tag. And that can't be bad if it attracts new players to the hobby.



FASA Corporation

For FASA's RPG's there is several notable releases such as the first novel for the **Earthdawn** game called *The Longing Ring*, also the *Barsaive Campaign Set*, detailing the province of the same name and an adventure titled *Mists of Betrayal*. For **Shadowrun** there will be the *The Germany Source Book*. **Battletech** is not forgotten with both *Solaris: The Reaches* and *BattleSpace* now available, plus a novel, *The Assumption of Risk*.

R.Talsorian

The pressures of readying **Cybergeneration** in time for GenCon told on the design team at RTG and so **Castle Falkenstein** has been delayed slightly. This new fantasy rpg should be available for Christmas and **Realms** will be running a feature review on it next issue.

Home of the Brave is the American sourcebook for **Cyberpunk** and *Deep Space* follows soon.

White Wolf

The **Storyteller System** games will see several releases over the coming months such as *Dark Colony* for **Vampire**, a supplement titled *Roman Tribunal* for **Ars Magica**, *Rage Across the Amazon* for **Werewolf** - complete with temporary tattoos, and finally **Mage** itself and the *Mage Storyteller Screens*.

Chaosium

Call of Cthulhu aficionados are to be well catered for with the imminent arrival of *Sacraments of Evil* a collection of adventures compatible with the *Cthulhu* by *Gaslight* supplement; also due soon are two new books of Cthulhu fiction - *The Hastur Cycle* and Robert Bloch's *Mysteries of the Worm*. The new **Elric!** rpg will be supported by *Fate of Fools* a book of adventures set in the Young Kingdoms due out in November.

GDW

Dangerous Journeys fans will be disappointed to hear that the release of **Unhallowed** the follow up game to **Mythus** has been put back to Sep/Oct 1994. For the time being, GDW will be concentrating their production schedule on their great survivor - **Traveller**. This into a new edition, *The New Era*, and has a swag of releases due.

The Australian Sourcebook

It's official, FASA has signed up **Realms's** own Colin Taber to write the *Australian Sourcebook* for the **Shadowrun** system. The book will be based on the articles that have appeared in **Australian Realms** (in issues 6-9 & 11). The manuscript is being worked on now and greatly expands on these original articles (including a section on New Zealand), but the final product won't be available for some time. In the meantime **Realms** will print the occasional **Shadowrun** scenario set in Australia and keep you up to date with any further developments amongst our future coverage of the game.

Gen Con

Our US correspondent Tom Dowd tells us that thousands of gamers descended on Milwaukee for the annual **Gen Con** in August. Biggest items at the convention were the fresh-from-the-presses **Mage** RPG from **White Wolf** and FASA's new **Earthdawn** fantasy game. Guest of Honour was George Takei, Mr Sulu from the original **Star Trek** series. Also at the convention was a sizeable contingent of Australian gamers, showing them what's what and how it's all done.

Unae

For the followers of the **Unae** installments out there we are offering anyone who wants a larger A3 sized map (showing the Kramer Confederation, Greater Baimiopia, northern Burvoy and the east coast of Evora) you just need to send a stamped self addressed envelope to **Realms** at P.O. Box 220, Morley WA 6062.

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